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## **A Critical analysis of theatre posters**

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**Rochester Institute of Technology**

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the College of Imaging Arts and Sciences  
in candidacy for the degree of Master of Fine Art.

**A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters**

by  
Pei-ying Wu

May 20 1997

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## Approvals

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Date 20 May 1997

Advisor: R. Roger Remington

Date May 24, 1997

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Date 20 May 1997

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Date May 20 1997

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Date May 20 1997

## **Acknowledgements**

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For their ideas and suggestions, I would like to thank my thesis committee: Professors Deborah Beardslee, R. Roger Remington and Dr. Richard Zakia. Also, I want to express a special note of thanks to Peter Ferran, Lorna Mittelman, B. J. Leopold and friends of RIT Players for their generous help and time.

## **Table of Contents**

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<b>Thesis Project Definition</b>	
What	1
Why	1
How	1
<b>Research &amp; Analysis</b>	2
Visual Rhetoric	3
Existing Poster Examples	4
Semiotics	5
Visual Perception	7
<b>Synthesis</b>	
Play Selection for Design Application	8
Design Application	9
<b>Ideation</b>	
Sketches	10
Development	12
<b>Evaluation</b>	
Preliminary Evaluation	16
Intermediate Evaluation	17
<b>Implementation</b>	
Refinement	21
Final Solutions	25
<b>Dissemination</b>	
Exhibition	26
Future Plans	26
Promotion for 1998 performance	
Book Cover	
<b>Retrospective Evaluation</b>	27
<b>Conclusion</b>	28
<b>Glossary of Terms</b>	29
<b>Bibliography</b>	31
<b>Appendices</b>	33

### What

Theatre posters have a long, richly aesthetic history, with many famous artists working in the medium. The essential purpose of theatre poster design is to graphically express the play's significance while appealing aesthetically to the play's potential audience.

As an experienced theatre practitioner and a student of graphic design, the author is interested in the interpretive nature of theatre poster design. Therefore, her MFA thesis project focuses critically on this question: **How well does the graphic design of a theatre poster, as a sign, communicate the performed play?**

### Why

Posters are widely used for theatre promotion. Studying posters that promote theatre arts helps in ascertaining the significance of particular visual elements as they contribute to the overall impact of theatre posters.

There is a need in design education to study the usefulness of visual rhetoric, semiotics and visual perception in graphic design. The subject of theatre posters provides an opportunity for such study. This analysis will provide students and professors with a useful framework for poster analysis and understanding.

### How

This project analyzed existing theatre posters to discover how design methods in terms of visual rhetoric, semiotics and visual perception have been used in creating theatre posters. In addition, a series of designed posters--the project application--is presented to support what is discussed in the critical analysis and to guide designers to become more aware of the significance of visual elements in poster design.

(Please see Appendix I, Thesis Planning Report)

This project focused on analyzing theatre posters.

The first step was to collect and gather hundreds of existing theatre posters from The Theatre Museum in London, Theatre Archives in London, National Theatres in London and Taiwan, local theatres in London, Cambridge, New York City, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Rochester, Toronto, and Taipei, to compose various cross-cultural examples.

The resulting large collection of posters was too broad in scope to analyze effectively. It included posters from many genres, such as tragedy, comedy, melodrama, farce, tragicomedy, opera and musicals, many of which had different design styles.

To resolve this problem, it became necessary to determine the definition of a theatre poster as a way of clarifying the goals of this analysis, which are to explore the syntax (visual grammar), semantics (meaning) and pragmatics (function) of theatre posters.

In the process of ascertaining, this question was divided into several demarcations: what is theatre, what is play/drama, what is a poster, and what is a *theatre* poster?

A theatre is a building designed for the presentation of dramatic performances; the act or institution of presenting dramatic performances. A play/drama is a prose or verse literary composition intended for theatre staging and performance by actors. A play is written to be seen and heard. Although a play usually tells a story, "the medium of drama," as Ezra Pound observed, "is not words, but persons moving about on stage using words."

A poster is a placard, bill or announcement posted to advertise or publicize something. Related to the definition, a theatre poster is a posted announcement which is published by a theatre administration to advertise a play. The poster examples which were used in this analysis were chosen by this definition.

To explore the structure, meaning and function of theatre posters, this project used the graphic design methods of **visual rhetoric**, **semiotics** and **visual perception** to organize and analyze these examples.

## Visual Rhetoric

A **Visual Rhetoric Matrix** provides a structure for showing how addition, suppression, substitution and exchange can change the syntax (visual grammar) and therefore the semantics (meaning) of a message by adding elements that are similar, different or ambiguous.

Classification of Rhetorical Figures (From Durand, 1970)

	Addition	Suppression	Substitution	Exchange
<b>Identity</b>	repetition	ellipsis	hyperbole	inversion
<b>Similarity</b> of form of content	rhyme simile	circumlocution	allusion metaphor	hendiadys homology
<b>Difference</b>	accumulation	suspension	metonymy	asyndeton
<b>Opposition</b> of form of content	zeugma antithesis	dubitation reticence	periphrasis euphemism	anacoluthon chiasmus
<b>False homologies</b> <b>Ambiguity</b>	antanaclasis	tautology	pun	antimetabole
<b>Paradox</b>	paradox	preterition	antiphrasis	antilogy

This project was a study about the question: How well does the design of a theatre poster, as a sign, communicate the performed play? Analysis was needed in the rhetorical area to identify the significance of the elements and the meanings in their relationships. Because the structure shown above may be difficult to understand, the matrix has been modified to be more easily understood.

The structure of visual rhetoric matrix, extracted from Durand's Classification of Rhetoric Figures

	Addition	Suppression	Substitution	Exchange
<b>Similarity</b>	repetition	ellipsis	allusion	inversion
<b>Difference</b>	accumulation	suspension	metonymy	asyndeton
<b>Ambiguity</b>	paradox	tautology	pun	double meanings



**Visual Rhetoric** (continued)**Existing Poster Examples**

A **Visual Rhetoric Matrix** was used to organize existing poster examples. The examples were catalogued by their usage of imagery and typography. (Please see Appendix II) Theatre posters which were chosen for this analysis were identified as exemplifying addition, suppression, substitution or exchange.

<b>Image</b>	<b>Addition</b>	<b>Suppression</b>	<b>Substitution</b>	<b>Exchange</b>
Similarity	see appendix II - A	see appendix II - D	see appendix II - G	see appendix II - J
Difference	see appendix II - B	see appendix II - E	see appendix II - H	no examples found
Ambiguity	see appendix II - C	see appendix II - F	see appendix II - I	no examples found

<b>Typography</b>	<b>Addition</b>	<b>Suppression</b>	<b>Substitution</b>	<b>Exchange</b>
Similarity	see appendix II - K	no examples found	see appendix II - O	no examples found
Difference	see appendix II - L	no examples found	no examples found	see appendix II - P
Ambiguity	see appendix II - M	see appendix II - N	no examples found	no examples found

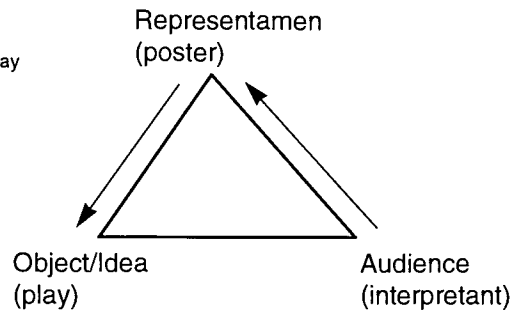
The strongest examples, located in Appendix II - A to P, were used for semiotic analysis.

### Semiotics

Semiotics is the scientific study of the application of signs. A sign is anything and everything that conveys meaning. Posters are signs that accomplish this effectively.

#### Semiotic Triad

This diagram is the relationship between audience, poster and play



Signs (posters) can be *analyzed* using the structure of an **Interpretant Matrix**. In looking at a poster, what is signified (e.g., romance) can be verified in terms of iconic, indexic and symbolic elements (signifiers used). For example, a rose as a sign can be iconic (looks like a rose), indexic (points to the shadow of a rose in a romantic setting) or symbolic (by convention, a red rose = passion).

#### Structure of Interpretant Matrix

Interpretant Matrix (for Analysis)				
Signifiers				
		Signified		
	Iconic (looks like)			
	Indexic (points to)			
	Symbolic (convention)			

Posters are composed of visual elements (signifiers), which represent different meanings. Identifying which elements in posters were iconic, indexic or symbolic by using the interpretant matrix helped determine which posters' themes were more easily comprehended.

This analysis displays the relationship between the theme of the play and the visual elements on posters, and shows how those two combined to make a visual impact. The result is that most theatre posters focus on visually communicating one main concept about the play, even though the play itself may be more complex or thematically layered. The question is: What kind of information can designers use to convey the most important theme to their audience?

### Example of using interpretant matrix to analyze a theatre poster



Theme	Revenge for love	Killing children
Iconic	The shape of sword is also a cross, which implies that the killing is both for love and inviolable reasons.	Blood on pale sword.  Blind person (using black color implies the person is in pain.)
Indexic	The white cross dividing the face implies that the person is burdened by divine love.	The shape of background implies person struggling.  The sword divides the face into two parts, one is more geometric, the other is more organic, which implies the person is almost insane (from ordinary-geometric shape-to out of control-organic shape)
Symbolic	Red color on lips and sword implies love	Red color on the end of sword – kill; red color on lips – love. These two reds connected together implies the love of mother, which speaks about killing a child.

Signs (posters) can also be *designed* using a **Generative Matrix**. A similar procedure is used, except instead of analyzing, signifiers are introduced to synthesize what is to be communicated. (Please see page 9, design application, the synthesis of using generative matrix)

Generative Matrix (for Synthesis)				
		Signified		
Signifiers	Iconic (looks like)			
	Indexic (points to)			
	Symbolic (convention)			

A generative matrix is used to identify designing elements which best represent themes of the play. The main goal of the generative matrix is to make sure the design is matched with the concept of the play, and to try to present it by a visually clean communication.

**Visual Perception**

Visual perception is the study of how humans see.

Rudolf Arnheim, in his *Art and Visual Perception – A Psychology of the Creative Eye*, says: “visual perception is what the artist works for. But it is also in the nature of man that he wishes to define what he sees and to understand why he sees what he does. Vision is not only a mechanical recording of elements but rather the apprehension of significant structure patterns.”

Here are several principles of visual perception which are often used in theatre posters:

<b>Closure</b>	nearly complete, familiar lines and shapes are more readily seen as complete (closed) than as incomplete lines and shapes.
<b>Common contour</b>	elements that share the same contour collapse depth.
<b>Continuity</b>	visual elements are grouped to form a continuous perception.
<b>Field dependency</b>	tilted elements within a poster can cause visual tension.
<b>Figure-ground</b>	Yin-Yang harmony 1. figure and ground cannot be seen simultaneously. 2. smaller areas of space are usually seen as figure.
<b>Gestalt</b>	the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
<b>Morphics</b>	ambiguous shapes within a poster can be seen as having the form of animals, humans etc.
<b>Personal space</b>	the size of the poster and the elements within the poster are relevant.
<b>Proximity</b>	elements that are close together are seen as a group.
<b>Similarity</b>	elements that are similar in line, shape or form are usually seen as a group.
<b>Subliminal</b>	1. visual information that is too weak to see. 2. information that is on the retina but not consciously seen.

To approach the ideal visual communication, this project presented a series of theatre posters to support what was investigated in the previous critical analysis.

### **Play Selection for Design Application**

For this thesis, the chosen play for this project's design application was *The Good Person of Szechwan*, by the German author, Bertolt Brecht.

This play was chosen for several reasons. First it is scheduled to be performed next year in Panara Theatre. The posters will be used to promote this RIT Players production. The play itself is similar in structure to Chinese Opera. Brecht's style is very different from Stanislavski's and from most of the traditional western theatre forms. It doesn't obey the standard rules for defining dramatis personae. In the play, everything happens simultaneously, and persons change roles, as in real life. The play is challenging and complex because many stories are happening at once, and they continue even when they are uncomfortable or difficult to understand. The characters try to improve their situations but are unable to do so.

Written in the late 1930s, the play portrays, in parable form, the struggle to survive in a world of economically defined social difficulties. Also, this play has a cross-cultural character: its author is German; its title sets the play in China; the planned performance is in America.

### **The story of *The Good Person of Szechwan***

The main character in the play, Shen Teh, has a dual role. She is an honest person who makes a living as a prostitute. She is very generous with the money she earns, especially with the poor. Soon they begin to exploit her generosity, leaving her with nothing to live on. To lessen her burden, she takes on the persona of Shui Ta, a hard-nosed businessman. In this way, Shen Teh also hopes to balance her romantic and generous personality. But she fails.

## Design Application

### *Identity Themes of the Play*

The first step of analyzing a play is to identify its **themes**. As studied with Dr. Ferran, the themes of *The Good Person of Szechwan* were identified as: dual personality, the capitalist system, exploitation, burden, gender, poverty, telling a story, traditional belief, and hope / hopelessness.

After identifying the main thematic thrusts of the play, a **Generative Matrix** was used to find out the design elements (images and color) that would signify these themes.

Extracted examples from Generative Matrix (for Analysis) Poster of *The Good Person of Szechwan*

	Dual personality	Capitalist system	Exploitation	Burden
<b>Iconic</b> (looks like)	Shen Teh/Shui Ta Female/male	Tobacco shop/factory	Factory and people	Shen Teh is pregnant
<b>Indexic</b> (points to)	Good – Shen Teh Evil – Shui Ta	Rent Money	The smoke from factory	Wang sells water Yan Sun wants to fly
<b>Symbolic</b> (convention)	Mask Light color/Dark color	Water Smoke	Warm color – good/nurturing Cold color – evil/hard-nosed business	Shui Ta abuses people

(Please see appendix IV, Generative Matrix, for the analysis of the play, *The Good Person of Szechwan*)

Of these potential themes, three were chosen that best represent the play; **dual personality**, **exploitation** and **burden**. Dual personality is the basic and most important concept of this play. It represents Shen Teh and Shui Ta, female and male, good and evil, and also expresses the struggle between kind poverty and hard-nosed business. Almost everything in this play is in contrast to everything else. Exploitation and burden are both caused by the capitalist system. Within this system, poor people were shown in doubt about their traditional beliefs; they had hope and they were hopeless, at the same time--a paradox. The three themes of dual personality, exploitation and burden contain all the other themes of the play.

### *The Choice of Color*

The colors pink and blue were used to symbolize dual personality, contrast and paradox.

In the last scene of the play, three gods exit the stage world by means of a pink cloud. Here pink represents hope/hopelessness and the ridiculousness of the gods' exit. Also, pink is a symbolic color of the female.

Blue is a symbolic color of the male. And blue is also for water, which has a very important role in this play, representing the flow of time and space; it also implies that people are like water. The use of blue could represent good or evil, depending on the purpose and situation (form).

### *Design Methods*

The design of this series of posters combined **visual perception** principles and followed the rules of **visual rhetoric** to represent the perfect match of visual presentation with the main concepts. Because of the progressive development of this project, poster number one is the most simple, and number three contains the most complex presentation.

The theme of dual personality is represented in **all** posters because this is the most important message of the play. It not only shows the split persons of Shen Teh and Shui Ta, but also represents good and evil, innocence and exploitation, hope and hopelessness, and female and male.

**Sketches**

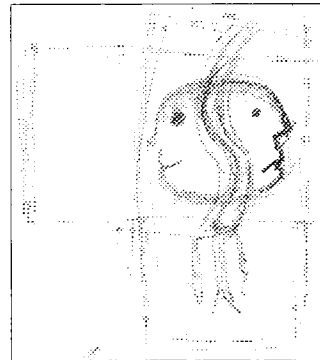
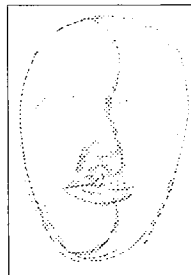
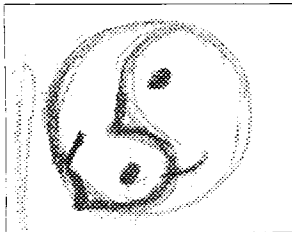
The ideas behind drawn images are derived from the Generative Matrix. Within the Generative Matrix are iconic, indexical and symbolic elements that are used in the posters to convey the information of this play. To represent the three chosen themes--dual personality, burden and exploitation--the main thematic images used in this series of posters are:

- dual personality – mask
- capitalist system – tobacco factory
- exploitation – tobacco and smoke
- exploitation and burden – working people
- burden and gender – pregnant woman
- poverty and story telling – people in a line formation

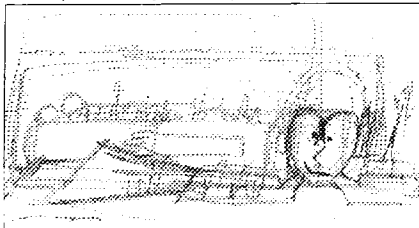
(Please see Appendix IV, Generative Matrix)

These sketches explore the variety of visual impact.

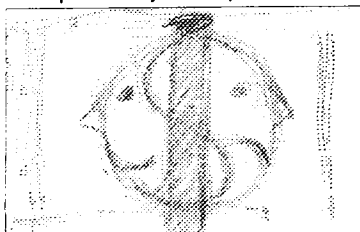
**Dual personality**



**Dual personality and Capitalist system**



**Dual personality and Exploitation**



**Dual personality and Gender**

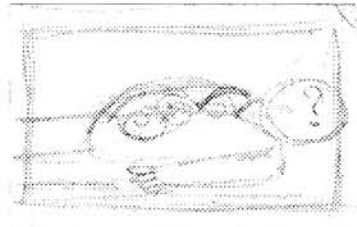
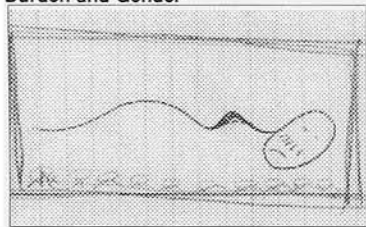


**Sketches** (continued)

**Dual personality, Burden and Exploitation**



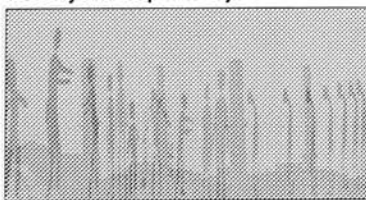
**Burden and Gender**



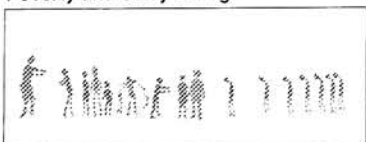
**Hope/hopelessness and Capitalist system**



**Poverty and Capitalist system**



**Poverty and Story telling**



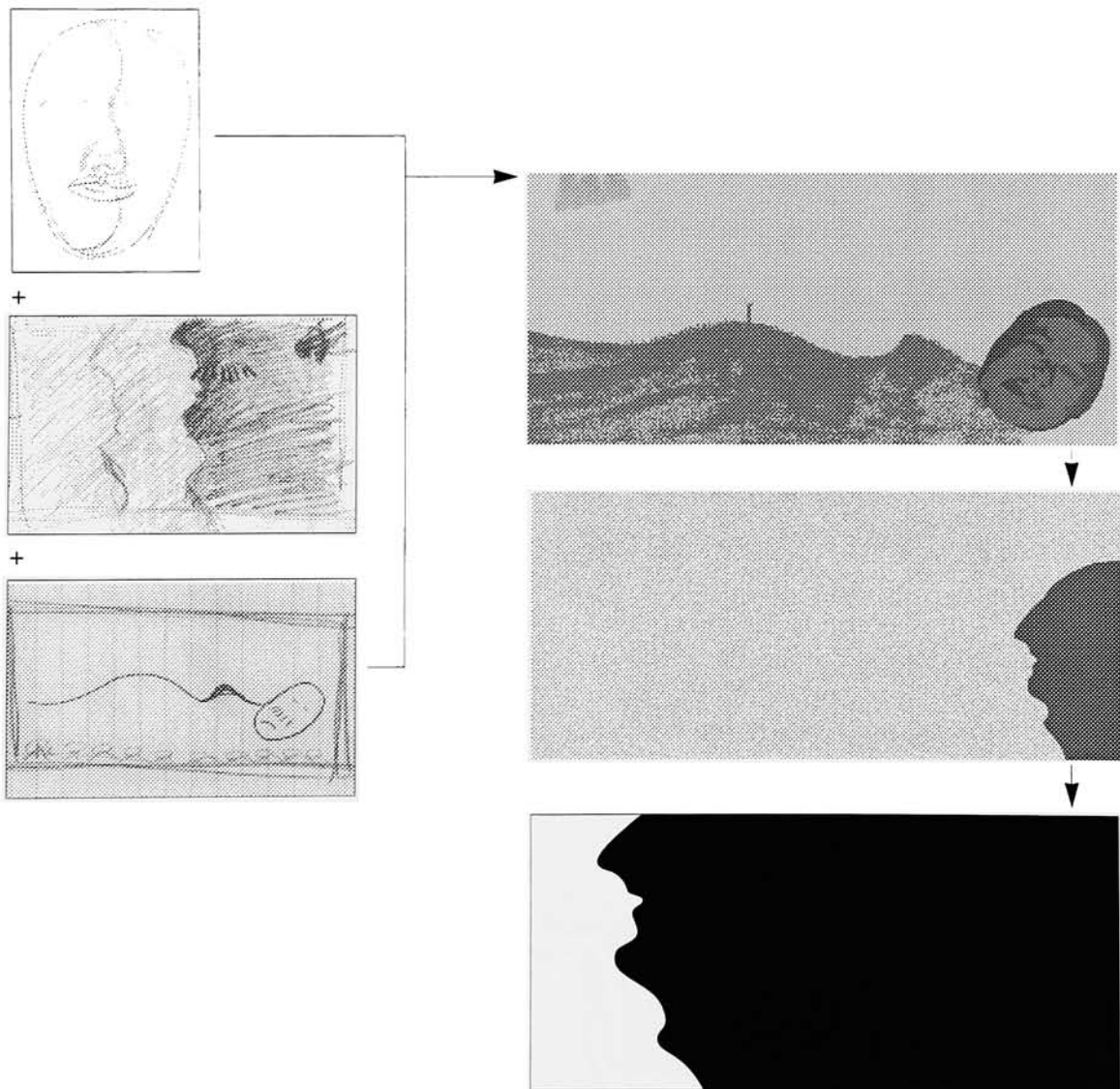


**Development**

**Poster One** presented dual personality, the most important concept of this play. The design is a variety of the Yin-Yang duality symbol.

It began by presenting just the basic idea of dual personality. In a later stage, the design turned into an interesting composition of Yin-Yang. From there, the poster began to present a heavy feeling by using an uneven balance of dark and light color, with more dark than light.

The concept for first poster was made visually simple.

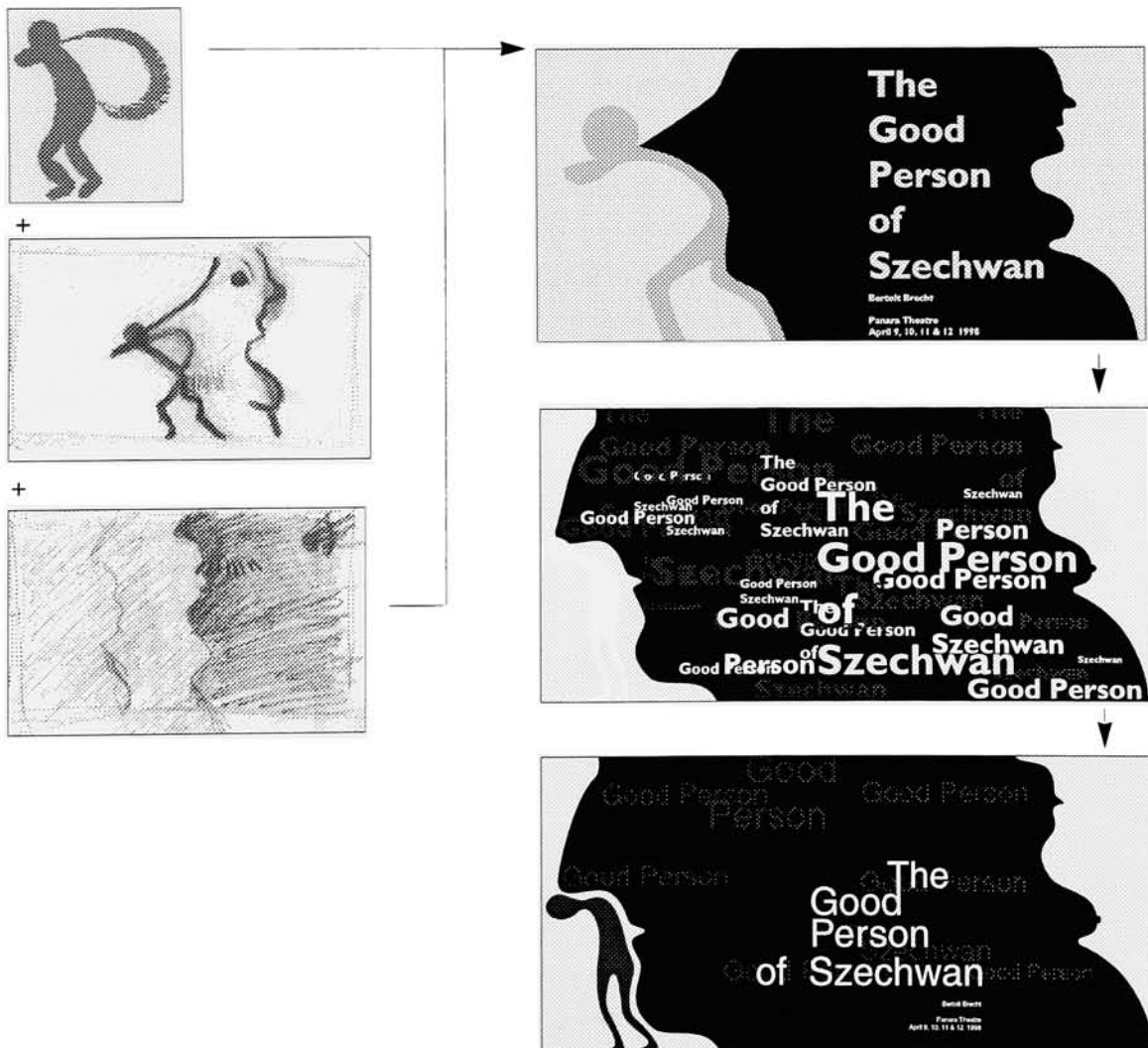


## Development (continued)

**Poster Two** presented the two themes of dual personality and burden.

The original idea was to combine male and female faces together, with the male's face shown as oppressing the working people (representing the burden of oppression). Also, these people are pulling out the hair of Shen Teh, at the back of the female face. This represents the dramatic fact of dual personality, and the complicated action in which she abused the people by becoming Shui Ta, but at the same time those people were pulling her down. Or, we could say that because those people were pulling her hair (being an annoying burden to her), she became her male "cousin" and abused them back.

The poster also uses typography to imply different thoughts from the opposing sides. Contrast is shown in the use of light and dark typography which is intended to symbolize a chaotic struggle between male and female, good and evil (Shen Teh and Shui Ta).



**Development** (continued)

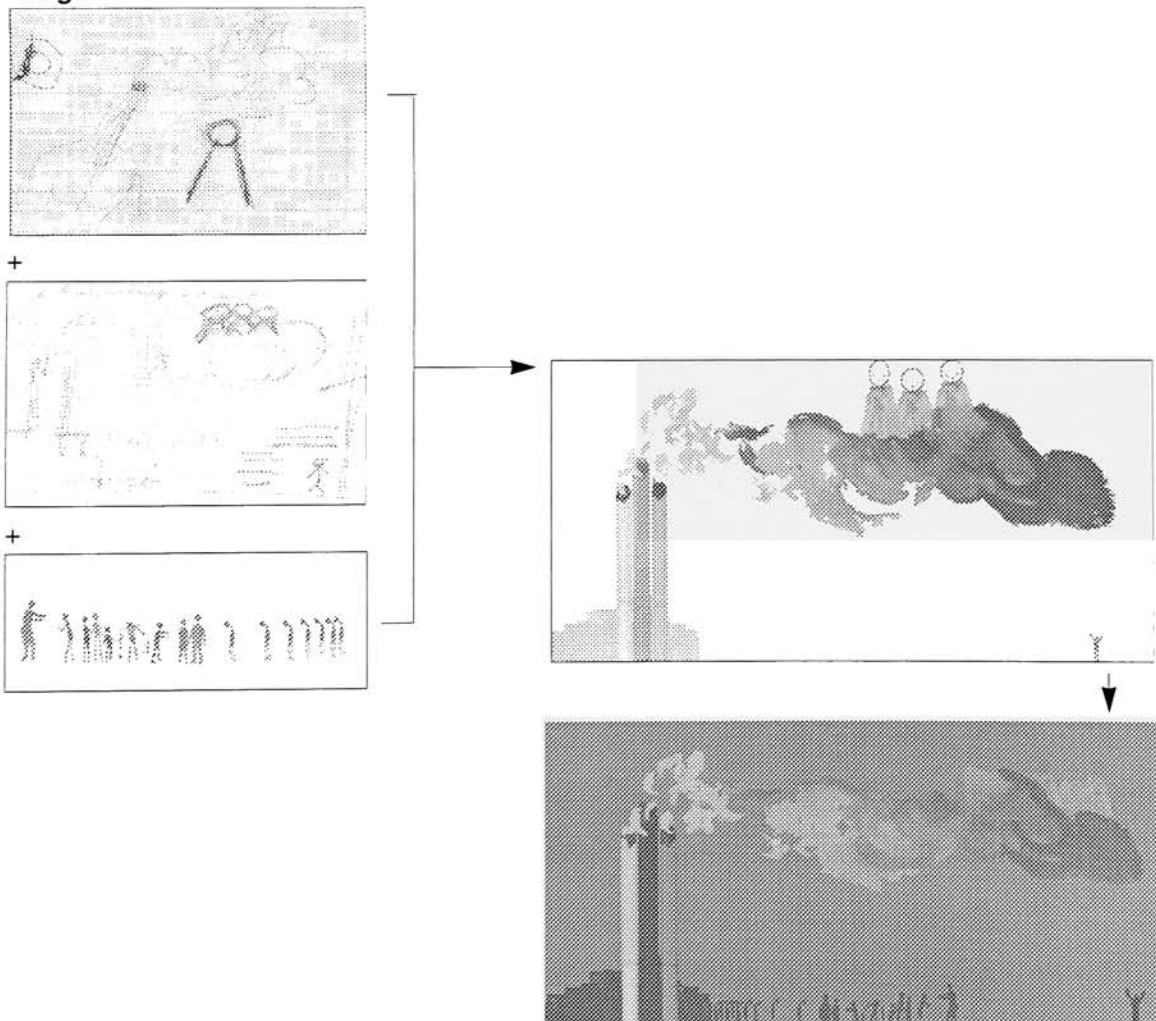
**Poster Three** presents exploitation. Because exploitation is a complex thought, this most complex representation combines several sketches in an attempt to convey the largest amount of information about this play, along with the feeling of exploitation.

*stage 1*

Pink clouds spewing out from the tobacco factory are used to present the capitalist system. The gods are shown on top of clouds, with a tiny person beneath them, creating a contrast between powerful gods and barely surviving people. Workers stand on the ground, representing hope and hopelessness.

*stage 2*

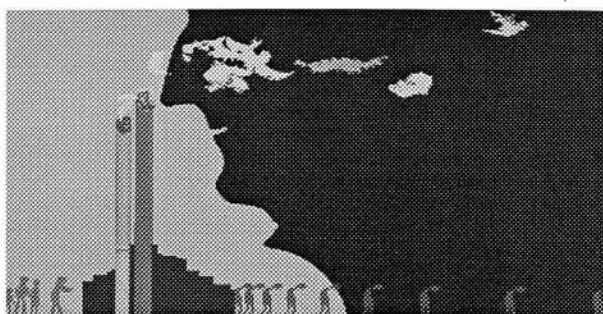
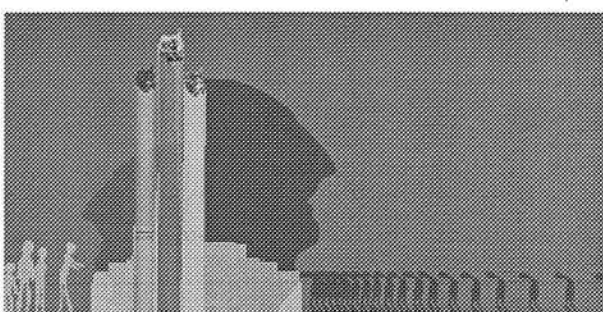
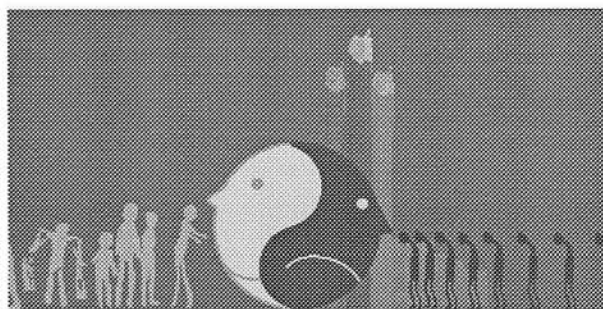
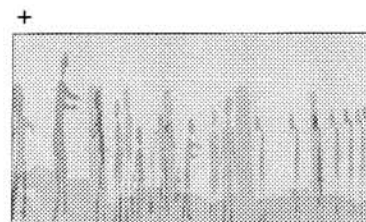
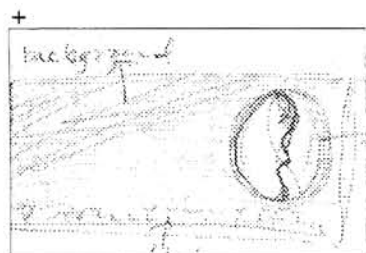
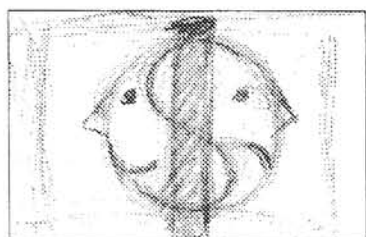
Clouds are refined to morpnic forms presenting the evil nature of the capitalist system. For the gods a bird is substituted, and the new form of clouds presents the theme of hope and hopelessness. Suffering people forming a line represent poverty. All these images combine to create a meaningful layout of the theme of exploitation.

**Stage 1**

Development (continued)

Poster Three (continued)

stage 2



### Preliminary Evaluation

#### Concept and image use

From an initial idea of using Tony Kushner's play, *Angels in America*, to the final decision to use Bertolt Brecht's *The Good Person of Szechwan*, Dr. Peter Ferran supplied a lot of information and suggestions for this project, especially regarding the images chosen for the design concept.

#### Color

The colors used in these posters are pink and blue. They would remind Americans of baby colors, but they were also conceptually important for this series of posters, so they were retained. To compensate for the Americans' baby colors association, the pink was subdued to resemble a skin tone, implying nursing, and the blue was darkened to imply the heavy feeling of burden.

#### Composition

The original posters focused on a line formation of workers to signify the style of this play, which moves in way like the flow of time and space. But it seemed that all the images were floating on the canvas, not related to each other. They were therefore changed into a full background for poster number one, which also keeps the dual personality concept, which is consistent through the whole series of posters.

#### Image and figure refinement

This refers to the style of design. At first all images were in a very organic configuration. Brush and ink were used to create images in a more Eastern or Chinese style. These were then scanned, digitized and manipulated with a computer. They were refined through the use of common contour and figure-ground considerations. The face, the female figure, and the line of people were given special attention.

**Intermediate Evaluation**

An evaluation form was devised and used to get feedback during interviews. The result was used to improve the poster design and to discover which posters were the most effective.  
(Please see Appendix V, Evaluation Form)

Questions in this evaluation form had several goals. The first questions were about **graphic design**. It asked about the clarity of usage of images, colors, compositions and typography. Questions were:

Good connections between images and typography?  
Well-chosen color?  
Unique image use?  
Easy to read?

Questions were also about the visual **communication** to the audience and the poster itself. Questions were:

Thought-provoking?  
Is the concept of the poster easy to understand?  
What do you think is the main concept of this play?

The third group of questions in this evaluation were concerned with **general feelings** about the poster. Questions were:

Strong aspiration to see the play?  
Aesthetically appealing?  
Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in this play?

The last part was about **suggestions** for improvement of the poster.

Questions were:

Which sketches make you want to go to see the play?  
Based on your answer to question 1, why did these posters inspire you?  
What are your suggestions for improvement?

**Interviewed personnel**

Only theatre people are included in this intermediate evaluation. At this particular time, the designer incorrectly assumed that since these theatre posters were for the promotion of the performance and for potential viewers of the show, most of the people interviewed should be members of RIT Players.

- Dr. Peter Ferran is a professor in the RIT College of Liberal Arts who teaches Introduction to Theatre, Theatre in the U.S., German Theatre, and Independent Theatre Projects courses. He is also the advisor to RIT Players.
- Bonnie Meath-Lang is a professor in the NTID Theatre Department who teaches Introduction to Theatre, Theatre Practicum, Introduction to Playwriting and Script Analysis courses.
- RIT Players is a student theatre association. Membership includes RIT students and faculty who are interested in the theatre.

**The Result of Evaluation**

Strongest part	Weakest part
Poster 1 Unique images usage	The concept of poster was not easy to understand
Poster 2 Unique images usage	Not easy to read
Poster 3 Unique images usage The concept is easy to understand Thought-provoking	Not easy to read

**Question 1**

Which sketches make you want to go to see the play?

There was a total of 26 people in this evaluation. Four of them chose poster two, three of them chose posters two and three, and nineteen of them chose poster three.

**Question 2**

Based on your answer to question 1, why did these posters inspire you?

*Poster two*

Aesthetically pleasing, made me want to see the play.

The oppression of the good person.

Messages were clear, the type was easy to read and contained graphical information.

Caught audience's eyes.

*Posters two and three*

Interesting image contrast.

Images give a lot of information in little persons.

The business of the poster invokes thoughts.

*Poster three*

Poster three was the only one that made sense at all to me.

Variety, complexity and unity.

More images, demanding more thought.

Because the people look beaten down.

More interesting, and more information about the play.

More elaborate, gives clues to grasp.

I like the multi-images, it was thought provoking, eye catching.

People on bottom thought provoking.

This poster carries the theme of the play, the exploited people. It is easy to understand.

Because it is dynamic, it shows the effect the story has on the characters.

I think the factory image portrays the play well.

It has images that are pretty and easy to understand.

I like the imagery, it was thought provoking, eye catching.

More to look at, I'd be more likely to pick it out of many posters to read.

Shows two faces and like images of turmoil.

Shows well of the theme of the play.

**The Result of Evaluation** (continued)

**Question 3**

What do you think is the main concept of this play?

Duality

Duality

Two persons in one body and hard workers

Men and woman

Struggle between good/bad

Exploitation

Exploitation

Exploitation

Exploitation in factory

Exploitation, day to day toil

Exploitation and hardship

Exploitation of people

Oppression

Oppression

Repression of people

Torture

People get beaten down

Society

Someone who takes a burden upon himself–his life

Something about a person who worked in factory

The abuse that workers live in a factory or capitalistic society

Struggle of tobacco workers

**Question 4**

Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play?

Oppression

Oppression

Depression

Depression

Struggle

Struggle

Struggle

Good/bad

Good/bad

Confusion

Confusion

Confusion

Sadness

Sadness

Sadness

Sadness

Sadness

Sorrow



**The Result of Evaluation** (continued)**Question 4** (continued)

Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play?

Gloom and doom, mostly dark emotions with a few glimmers of hope and light

Heavy

Frustration

Work hard

Hardship

Serous

Pain

Martyrdom

Thought provoking

Dramatic

Worthlessness

Happiness hurt betrayal

**Question 5**

What are your suggestions for improvement?

Make the small text more readable

Make the poster easier to read

Bigger type with most of poster three

Bigger font

Large print

Bigger print

Larger print

Bigger text

Change type face

More distinct type

Fewer words

Change colors

Different colors

Try other color combination

More color variety

The color, you should change it

Try different symbols to convey information

Get rid of smoke

Work on the face/chest/belly outline

Don't make them so abstract.

They are harder to understand when you have to start at the picture of the figure.

Make little people bigger

(Please see Appendix V)

### Refinement

From the results of evaluation, this project was refined in terms of typography, figures, color and the relationship between images and typography.

**Poster One** focuses on arousing curiosity.  
(Please see Page 25)

### Images

From evaluation, it emerged that the weakest part of this poster was that it is not easy to understand. To resolve this problem, the man-woman figure was refined, to make it more realistic and not so abstract. The main images were also refined, to make the man's face and woman's figure clearer.

### Typography

The typography was altered, to make it not only clearly readable but also as strong as an image. It was made to look almost like a logo for the play.

**Visual Perception** (please see page 7)

#### *Gestalt*

= The background image was created on the principle that the overall images were more important than the details they were comprised of, the viewer cannot look only at the man's face or the woman's figure.

#### *Figure-ground*

= The man's face cannot be seen simultaneously with the woman's figure.

#### *Common contour*

= The man's face shares the same contour with the woman's figure.

#### *Visual field dependency*

= The tiled face and figure caused visual tension

**Visual Rhetoric** (please see page 3)

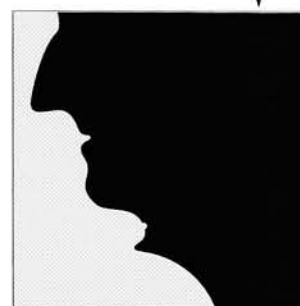
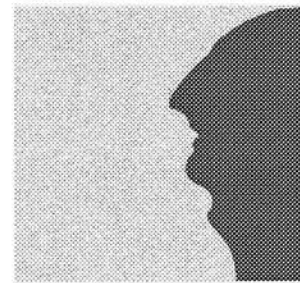
#### *Suppression*

= Simplification of the human figure and face.

#### *Exchange*

= Interchange of figure (human figure) and ground (human faces)

### Image Refinement



## Refinement (continued)

**Poster Two** gave more information to audiences.  
(Please see Page 25)

**Image**

Evaluation indicated that the little figures of working people needed more refinement, to make the image visually stronger in graphic style and to define a clearer relationship among them.

**Typography**

From evaluation, it seemed that the biggest problem in this poster was the typography. An attempt was made to make it as clean as possible. Because the theme of this poster is burden, mixed typography would show the struggle between good woman and evil man, in deciding if he/she intends to abuse people.

**Visual Perception** (please see page 7)

The second poster continues using the same background, but inverted. This meant using *Gestalt, Figure-ground and Common contour*.

**Visual Rhetoric** (please see page 3)*Suppression*

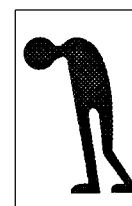
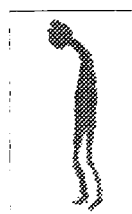
= Simplification of the human figure and face; the burden of the human body, and some of the repeating titles were very difficult to see because of the tone of color being used.

*Exchange*

= Inverse placement of color for the man and woman from the poster one.

*Addition*

= Repetition of title

*Image Refinement*

**Refinement** (continued)

**Poster Three**, the most complex poster in this series, was attempting to express exploitation in a very clear visual way. (Please see Page 25)

**Images**

The main refinement in this poster is in the human figures. To make them visually more unified and systematic, they were given a more geometric form.

**Typography**

To relate type to the images, an attempt was made to form the letter blocks like stairs, ascending to the hope symbolized by the bird, or to descend to the hopelessness symbolized by the burdened people. The typography creates images in the form of a stair from bottom left to upper right and lower right, which indexes both wishfulness and hopelessness.

**Visual Perception** (please see page 7)

It used all principles which the other two posters used, adding:

*Cloud morphics*

= The ambiguous shapes of those columns of smoke (clouds) can be seen as having the form of an evil dragon, a monster and bird.

*Continuity*

= The clouds were grouped to form a continuous image. Also, from the bottom left the people formed a continuous line toward the upper right bird through stairs (factory and typography).

*Similarity*

= People at the bottom of this poster are all of similar form.

**Visual Rhetoric** (please see page 3)*Suppression*

= Simplification of the human figure and face; the human body.

*Exchange*

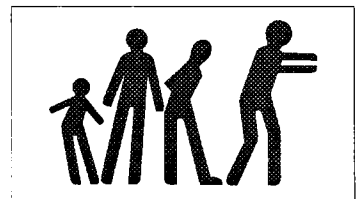
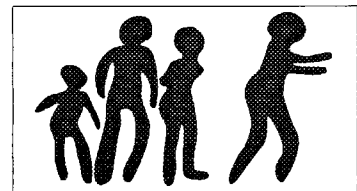
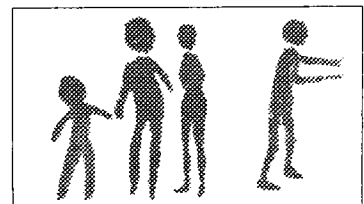
= Interchange of figure (human figure) and ground (human faces).

*Addition*

= Repetition of worker figures

*Substitution*

= Replacement of smokestacks with cigarettes, smoke with clouds.

*Image Refinement*

Refinement (continued)

Common to all three posters  
(Please see Page 25)

**Image**  
Although some evaluations said this series of posters was too abstract, they felt the image use was strong. Because nobody suggested changing images, no changes were made at all in the use of the images in this project.

**Typography**  
Titles in the three posters are at the same height, but the positions change progressively from right to left. The location of the play's title moved progressively from right to left, at the same height position.

**Color**  
The blue color was darkened, to emphasize contrast.

Final Generative Matrix for All Three Posters

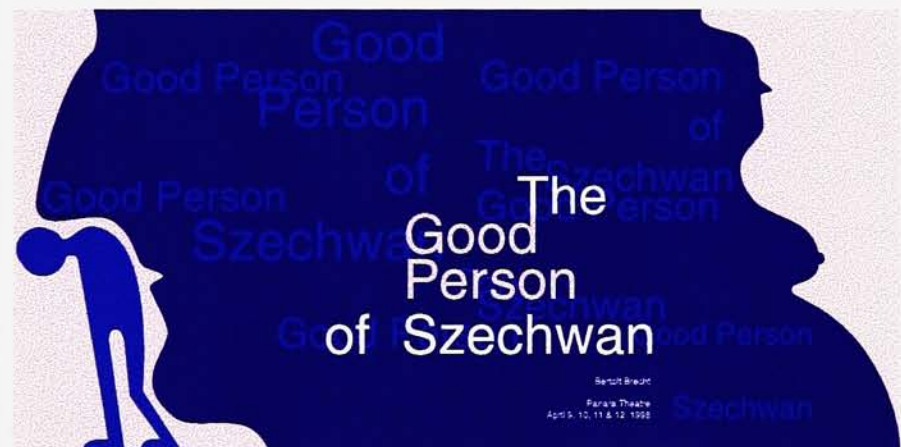
	Poster 1 Dual Personality	Poster 2 Burden	Poster 3 Exploitation
<b>Iconic</b> (looks like)	Profile of female-good Profile of male-evil	Person struggling to survive  Pregnant woman	Healthy people enter factory and exit as burdened souls  Smokestacks spew out expressive smoke
<b>Indexic</b> (points to)	Breast points to title "good person"	Man's nose points to struggling person	Duality of smoke stacks suggest factories both good and exploitive
<b>Symbolic</b> (convention)	Pink-female Blue-male	Shape of woman's belly	Most of the poster is dark, suggesting evil
	Light-good Dark-bad	Pink-female Blue-male	Left side of poster is pink, feminine suggesting good and nurturing

Final Solution

Poster One



Poster Two



Poster Three



**Exhibition**

This series of posters was displayed in Bevier Gallery from April 7 through April 24, 1997. Explanation panels (please see Appendix VI) defined the aims of this project and the principles of Visual Rhetoric, and examples of posters used for analysis were exhibited along with the project's three original theatre posters (sized 32" X 16").

**Future Plan***Promotion for 1998 RIT Players performance*

This project also aimed to promote the production of *The Good Person of Szechwan* at NTID's Panara Theatre in Spring, 1998. The plan for the promotion includes making multiple copies for posting across the RIT campus. Poster number one will be displayed one month before the production date, to arouse the audience's curiosity. Poster number two will appear two weeks before the show, to provide more information about the play. Poster number three will be distributed during the week of the five performances. The potential audience are members of the RIT community.

*Book Cover*

It is hoped that American playwright Tony Kushner, whose English adaptation of Brecht's *The Good Person of Szechwan* may be used for the 1998 RIT production, will agree to use one of these poster designs for the cover of his published version, when it appears.

### Synthesis

Because this is a project in *theatre* poster design, the process of design should ideally include the cooperation of the production's director and its stage, costume, and light designers, in order for the posters to achieve the most accurate sense of the particular performance's interpretation. In this case, these posters should probably be changed somewhat for next year's RIT production.

### Ideation

The posters should have made a greater effort to balance theory (the abstract imagery) and practice (the overall visual impact). This is especially true of poster number one, which many responders to the evaluation forms did not understand because of its abstraction.

They might also have tried to use a variety of media, such as collage, paper cut, or three-dimensionality, to create a feeling that had more to do with theatre's actual three-dimensional structure.

### Evaluation

The evaluation form should have been distributed to a wider variety of people. All the sample responses came from people who either work in theatre or love theatre. Theatre posters are not seen only by theatre people. Also, the survey questions should have been more detailed and asked for more concrete reasons for people's reactions. They also need to ask for background information on the interviewed people.



### Research & Analysis

This project started with an analysis of existing posters. It focused on the way visual elements create visual impact and attract an audience. Using clear or ambiguous images could yield the same results, so the main issue is theme. It is the key element, the item which connects everything in the poster's design.

### Synthesis

The results of the analysis of existing theatre posters led to an investigation of the themes of the play, *The Good Person of Szechwan*. Part of the decision to analyze this play was its complex usage of many themes simultaneously. Using different theories to create one series of posters was very complex, but using one main theme in each poster was much more effective in catching the audience's eyes and interest.

Applying design methods to the creation of theatre posters is a challenge. Trying to balance all the elements and make them relate to each other was very valuable practice in the use of design principles. In the process of design and creation, using the principles of visual rhetoric, semiotics, and visual perception makes it easier to convey information to the audience.

### Personal

I learned a great amount about organizing the composition, and scheduling the completion, of a complex project. I realized particularly that planning ahead is very important, and I also learned how to modify the plan when problems occurred.

I increased my understanding of how to deal with a variety of research materials.

I gained considerable knowledge in the areas of visual perception, visual rhetoric and semiotics. This project offered excellent practice in the synthesis of all these principles.

<b>Accumulation</b>	Elements are amassed or collected in graphic design.
<b>Addition</b>	The addition of elements that are similar, different or ambiguous.
<b>Allusion</b>	Elements entice with something desirable.
<b>Ambiguity</b>	Elements can introduce confusion, uncertainty and multiple meaning.
<b>Circumlocution</b>	Design using a roundabout expression to present a theme.
<b>Closure</b>	Nearly complete, familiar lines and shapes are more readily seen as complete (closed) than as incomplete lines and shapes.
<b>Comedy</b>	A play in which the story and characters are humorous and the ending is happy.
<b>Common contour</b>	Elements that share the same contour collapse depth.
<b>Continuity</b>	Visual elements are grouped to form a continuous perception.
<b>Difference</b>	Elements are visually different.
<b>Drama/play</b>	A prose or verse literary composition intended for theatre staging and performance by actors. A play is written to be seen and heard. Although a play usually tells a story, "the medium of drama," as Ezra Pound observed, "is not words, but persons moving about on stage using words."
<b>Dramatis personae</b>	The characters of a play.
<b>Exchange</b>	Changing the syntax of a poster by rearranging elements that are similar, difference and ambiguous.
<b>Farce</b>	A play marked by slapstick humor and wild improbabilities of plot.
<b>Field dependency</b>	Tilted elements within a poster can cause visual tension.
<b>Figure-ground</b>	Yin-Yang harmony 1. figure and ground cannot be seen simultaneously. 2. smaller areas of space are usually seen as figure.
<b>Genre</b>	Type; class or style of arts.
<b>Gestalt</b>	The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
<b>Melodrama</b>	A play that relies heavily upon suspense, sensational events, coincidence, and conventional sentiment instead of characterization.
<b>Metaphor</b>	Elements which designate an object or idea are used to represent a dissimilar object or idea for comparison or analogy.
<b>Morphics</b>	Ambiguous shapes within a poster can be seen as having the form of animals, humans etc.

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<b>Musical</b>	A play which incorporates the use of music and sung dialogue.
<b>Opera</b>	A theatrical work consisting of a dramatic performance set to music, usually with orchestral accompaniment.
<b>Personal space</b>	The size of the poster and the elements within the poster are relevant.
<b>Poster</b>	A poster is a placard, bill or announcement posted to advertise or publicize something.
<b>Pragmatic</b>	Concerned with facts or actual occurrences in graphic design such as production, distribution, specification and visibility.
<b>Proximity</b>	Elements that are close together are seen as a group.
<b>Pun</b>	The humorous use of a word involving two interpretations of the meaning.
<b>Repetition</b>	Elements are repeating.
<b>Semantic</b>	The meanings of message.
<b>Similarity</b>	Elements that are similar in line, shape or form are usually seen as a group.
<b>Subliminal</b>	1. Visual information that is too weak to see. 2. Information that is on the retina but not consciously seen.
<b>Substitution</b>	Removing elements that are similar, different or ambiguous and replacing them with other elements.
<b>Suppression</b>	Restricting the visibility of elements that are similar, different and ambiguous.
<b>Suspension</b>	Elements create a postponement of judgment or decision.
<b>Syntactic</b>	The formal qualities of graphic design, such as unity, contrast, composition texture, shape, ...etc.
<b>Theatre</b>	A building designed for the presentation of dramatic performances; the act or institution of presenting dramatic performances.
<b>Theatre poster</b>	A posted announcement, published by a theatre administration to advertise a play.
<b>Tragedy</b>	A dramatic work depicting a protagonist engaged in a morally significant struggle ending in ruin or profound unhappiness.
<b>Tragicomedy</b>	A drama that combines elements of both tragedy and comedy.

*A History of Graphic Design*

Philip B. Meggs, Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1992

*Art and Illusion*

E.H. Gombrich, Pollingen Foundation, New York, 1960

*Art and Visual Perception*

Rudolf Arnheim, University of California Press, Berkeley,  
Los Angeles, London, 1974

*Broadway Ballyhoo*

Henderson, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1989

*Communication: The Living End*

John A. Ciampa, Philosophical Library, Inc., New York, 1989

*Gilbert Lesser Theatre Posters, etc.*

Gilbert Lesser, INCR INC., New York/Paris, 1987

*Graphic Communication*

William J. Bowman, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York/  
London/Sydney, 1968

*Graphic Design*

Richard Hollis, Thames and Hudson Ltd, London, 1994

*Graphis Typography 1*

Edited by B. Martin Pedersen, Graphis Press Corp., New York, 1994

*Modern Posters in Taiwan*

Ee-Fun Publication, Taiwan, 1992

*The Playbill*

Gordon Martin, The Institute of Design of IIT, Chicago, 1963

*Plays International*

Edited by Peter Roberts, Plays International Ltd, Shropshire

*Posters*

John Barnicoat, Thames and Hudson Inc., New York, 1972

*Principles of Visual Perception*

Carolyn M. Bloomer, Design Press, New York, 1976

*Red Hot and Blue: American Musical*

Henderson and Bowers, Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C., 1996

*Smithsonian*

Editorial and Publishing Offices, 900 Jefferson Drive, SW, Rm 1301, Washington, D.C. 20560

*That's Entertainment*

Alexander Isley Design, PBC International, Inc., New York, 1995

*Theatre*

Edit by Ann Shuttleworth, Repertory Publishers Ltd, London

*The Theatre*

Phyllis Hartnoll, Thames and Hudson Ltd, London, 1985

*Theatre: a model of the world*

Alvin Schnupp, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1993

*The Theatre Museum*

Compiled by Alexander Schouvaloff, Scala Publications Ltd, London, 1987

*Theaterplakate*

Hellmut Rademacher, Edition Leipzig, German, 1990

*Theaterplakate*

Heinz Jost, Beaulieu-Verlag Bern, 1984

*Theatre Posters*

Catherine Haill, Theatre Museum, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1983

*Time Out*

Time Out Magazine Ltd, London

*Types of Drama*

Sylvan Barnet, Morton Berman, William Burto, HarperCollins College Publishers, New York, 1993

*Visual Concepts for Photographers*

Leslie Stroebel, Hollis Todd, Richard Zakia, Focal Press Inc., New York, 1980

### **Appendix I**

Thesis Planning Report

### **Appendix II**

Existing Poster Examples

### **Appendix III**

Interpretant Matrix

### **Appendix IV**

Generative Matrix

### **Appendix V**

Evaluation

Summary of Evaluation Results

Examples of Blank Evaluation Forms

Evaluation Forms From Interviewed People

### **Appendix VI**

Exhibition Explanation Panels

**Appendix I**  
**Thesis Planning Report**

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## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters



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## **Table of Contents:**

4 Situation Analysis

5 Project Description

6 Mission Statement

7 Research Methodology Diagram

9 Goals/Objectives/Strategies

9 Research

11 Definition

12 Application

13 Dissemination

14 Evaluation

15 Time Table

16 Bibliography

17 Glossary of Terms

**Situation Analysis:**

Posters are widely used for theatre but these posters seldom are analyzed or discussed in any critical way. From a visual communication perspective, I intend to study posters as they have been used to promote theatre arts.

A poster is a special form of design because designers have to display all the information within a limited space. Posters usually have a title, text and images. How do these elements affect each other? How can designers make their posters more attractive and memorable?

There is a need in design education to study how visual perception and visual thinking influence viewers. This topic of theatre posters can be classified using perceptual and rhetorical systems. This analysis will provide students and professors with a useful framework for understanding.

**Project Description:**

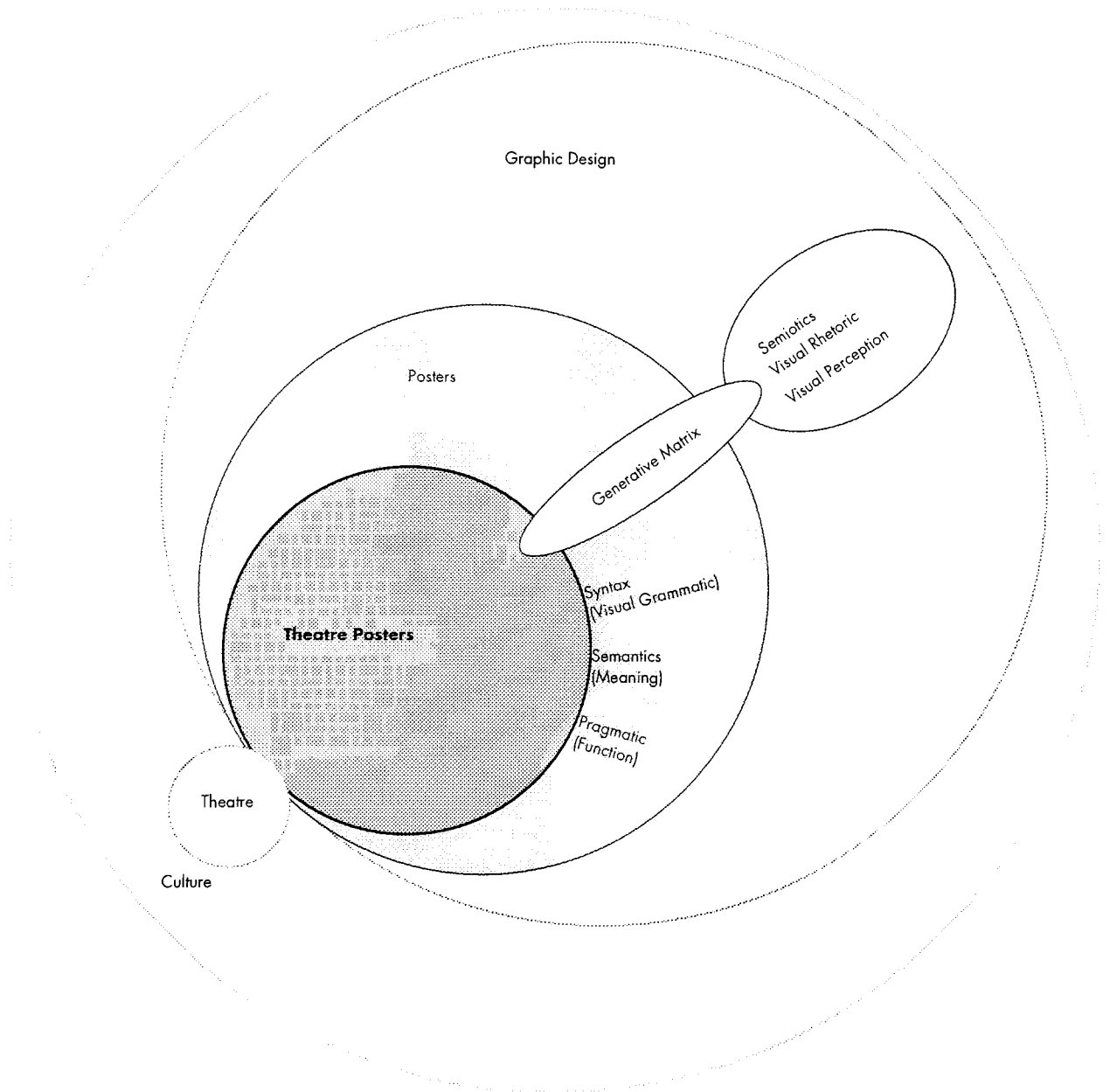
I will do critical research about posters from historical and other points of view. I propose to explore the visual perception system in terms of posters' size(scale), composition and other elements and to identify visual elements in rhetorical systems.

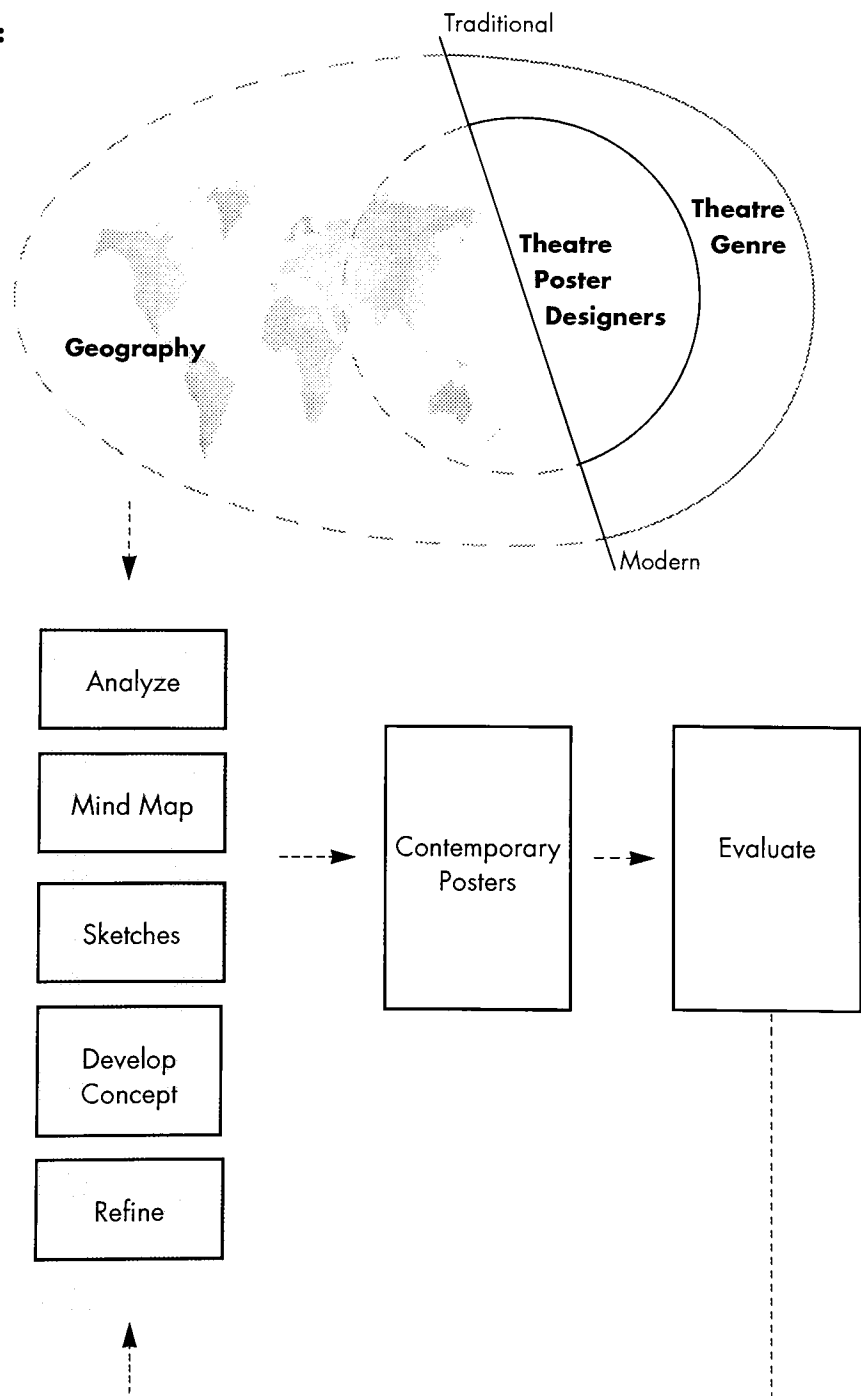
To approach the ideal visual communication, I will present a series of posters to support what is discussed in the critical analysis.

**Mission Statement:**

This thesis project is about theatre posters. It will be a study of the relationship between theory and graphic design. I will design a series of posters to present critical findings from this project which could guide designers to become more aware the significance of visual elements as they contribute to the impact of theatre posters.

## Research Methodology:



**Research Methodology:**

## Research

Goal:	Objectives:	Strategies:
To do research about posters.	To do critical research about poster history.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do research in several libraries studying through different sources, such as books, articles, magazines.</li> <li>2. Do search on the internet to gather information about poster history.</li> <li>3. Go to poster collection museum such as Cooper Union, Smithsonian Museum to do research and appreciate the important posters in history.</li> </ol>
	To do research the printing history of posters.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do research in Cary Library to study printing history.</li> <li>2. Consult the faculty in the printing department to understand the relationship between posters and printing.</li> </ol>
	To do research typography used in posters.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do research about history of typography.</li> <li>2. Consult Bruce Meader and Heinz Klinkon about typography used in posters.</li> <li>3. Compare different styles of typography in posters.</li> </ol>
To study the purpose of posters.	To explore the function of posters.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Study the pragmatics of posters in different usage.</li> <li>2. Investigate the effect factors which influence the usage of posters.</li> </ol>
	To do research about different poster usage and forms.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do research in libraries and on the internet to gather information.</li> <li>2. Find out the purposes of posters in different time periods.</li> </ol>

## Research (continued)

### Goal:

To gather information about theatre.

### Objectives:

To do critical research about theatre history.

### Strategies:

1. Do research in libraries.
2. Do search on the Internet to download the document.
3. Consult Dr. Peter Ferran about history of theatre and make summary from conversation.

To explore different posters presenting the same play.

1. Choose several important plays from theatre history, which are not only historically important but also have rich culture interchange.
2. Discover theatre posters in different areas such as U.K., U.S.A., Asia or other regions.

To do research about marketing and commercial of theatre.

1. Do research from a historical point of view to understand the transition of theatre dissemination.
2. Review theatre transitions to consult the situation in theatre marketing and commercial promotion today.
3. Locate posters in theatre commercial promotion.

To explore the syntacs semantics and pragmatics of posters in terms of perceptual principles and rhetoric.

To study visual perception theory.

1. Study visual perception in an independent study with Dr. Zakia.
2. Research the application of visual perceptions in graphic design to practice how to analyze posters in terms of visual perceptual principles.

To study visual rhetorical system.

1. Read books about visual rhetoric to study rhetorical theory.
2. Review Dr.Zakia's lectures from first year.



**Definition****Goal:**

To examine the previous research material, to organize it and relate it to my study.

**Objectives:**

To provide a clear definition of a poster.

To analyze the significance of the use of posters as representaments for theatre.

**Strategies:**

1. Study the existing definitions of posters.
2. Use matrix to make a definition.
3. Combine above definitions to one clear definition.

1. Locate posters which provide opportunity for analysis.
2. Analyze posters using an interpretant matrix.
3. Evaluate the posters .

## Application

### Goal:

To present information about the posters project.

### Objectives:

To design contemporary posters that are visually interesting and informative of earlier theatre posters.

### Strategies:

1. Create a mind map.
2. Select concepts to develop.
3. Use an generative matrix to select and design iconic indexic and symbolic elements for the contemporary posters.
4. Experience the actual theatre performance to compare the performance with the posters.

To produce a set of posters.

1. Choose the form of posters.
2. Decide the materials needed.
3. Determine quantity of posters within a set.

To refine the final production.

1. Make last adjustments.
2. Ensure the series is unified.

To create a visual rhetorical matrix.

1. Find graphic design posters that show the various rhetorical operations.
2. Gather found materials in well organization to establish a matrix.

**Dissemination****Goal:**

To exhibit in Bevier Gallery.

**Objectives:**

To display a set of theatre posters and visual rhetorical matrix.

**Strategies:**

1. Exhibit the posters in an interesting and instructional manner.
2. Exhibit the visual rhetoric matrix to show the various rhetorical statements.

## Evaluation

### Goal:

To develop methods of evaluation.

### Objectives:

Establish evaluation methods which will help in the design of the thesis.

Get feedback from committee and peer evaluation.

### Strategies:

1. Devise questionnaires.
2. Interview designers.
3. Compile opinions.

1. Meet with committee regularly.
2. Meet with classmates weekly.
3. Record reactions and responses.

**Time Table:**

<b>Thesis:</b>	<b>R.I.T. Calender:</b>	<b>Calendar:</b>
<b>Fall Quarter</b>		
9/5 Begin Thesis Planning	Classes Begin	Labor Day
10/31		Halloween
11/5		Election Day
11/11		Veterans Day
11/20	Fall/Winter Break 12/1	Thanksgiving Day 11/28
<b>Winter Quarter</b>		
12/2 Begin Researching	Classes Begin	
12/9		
12/16 1st Committee Meeting		
12/23	Holiday Break	Christmas 12/25
12/30	Holiday Break	New Year 1/1
1/6 Begin Synthesizing	Classes Begin	
1/13		
1/20		
1/27 2nd Committee Meeting		
2/3 Begin Implementing		
2/10		Lincoln Day 2/12
2/17		Washington Day 2/22
2/24 3rd Committee Meeting		
3/1	Winter/Spring Break 3/9	
<b>Spring Quarter</b>		
3/10 Begin Evaluation	Classes Begin	
3/17 Prepare Exhibition	1st Thesis Show	
4/7 Begin writing thesis report	2nd Thesis Show	
4/28	3rd Thesis Show	
5/5 4th Committee Meeting		
5/24	Commencement	

## Bibliography:

- A History of Graphic Design* Philip B. Meggs, Van Nostrand Reinhold, New York, 1992
- Art and Illusion* E.H. Gombrich, Pollingen Foundation, New York, 1960
- Art and Visual Perception* Rudolf Arnheim, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1974
- Communication : The Living End* John A. Ciampa, Philosophical Library, Inc., New York, 1989
- Graphic Communication* William J. Bowman, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York/London/Sydney, 1968
- Theatre Posters* Catherine Haill, Theatre Museum, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1983
- Modern Posters in Taiwan* Ee-Fun Publication, Taiwan, 1992
- Posters* John Barnicoat, Thames and Hudson Inc., New York, 1972
- Principles of Visual Perception* Carolyn M. Bloomer, Design Press, New York, 1976
- Smithsonian* Editorial and Publishing offices are at 900 Jefferson Drive, SW, Rm 1301, Washington, D.C. 20560
- Visual Concepts for Photographers* Leslie Stroebel, Hollis Todd, Richard Zakia, Focal Press Inc., New York, 1980

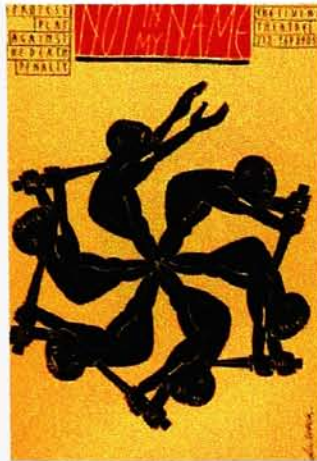
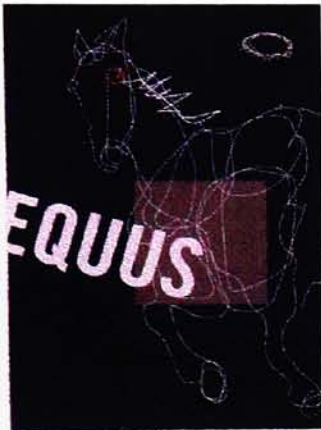
**Glossary of Terms:**

<i>Graphic Design</i>	Creative process combining type and image to produce a meaningful message in order to communicate to a given audience.
<i>Pragmatic</i>	Aspect of graphic design concerned with the practical aspect of graphic design, such as production, distribution, specification, and visibility.
<i>Semantic</i>	Aspect of graphic design concerned with what message mean, how they communicate, and how they are perceived.
<i>Semiotic</i>	Study of the ways in which systems of signs function and evolve, relate to meaning, serve and transform their user, can be improved to fulfill new needs and meet new challenges.
<i>Syntactic</i>	Aspect of graphic design concerned with the formal qualities of graphic design, such as unity, contrast, composition, texture, shape, ...etc.
<i>Visual Communication</i>	Type of message making which relies primarily on imagery rather than language to communicate to its audience.

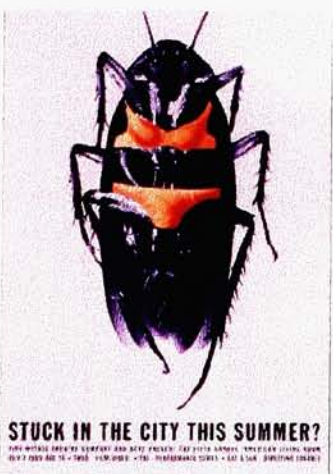
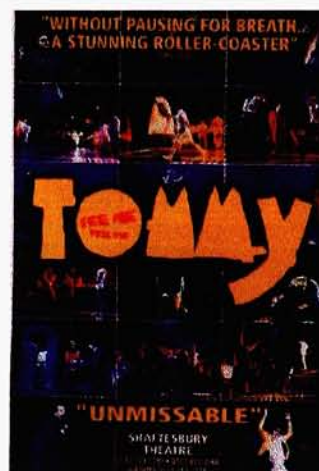
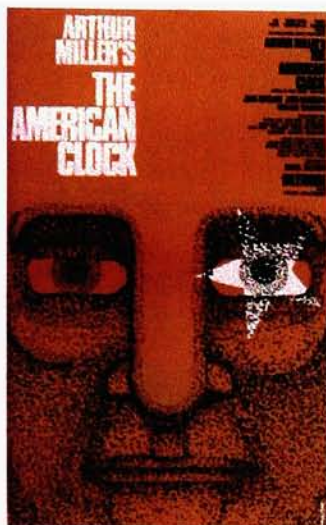
**Appendix II**  
**Existing Poster Examples**



Addition / Similarity

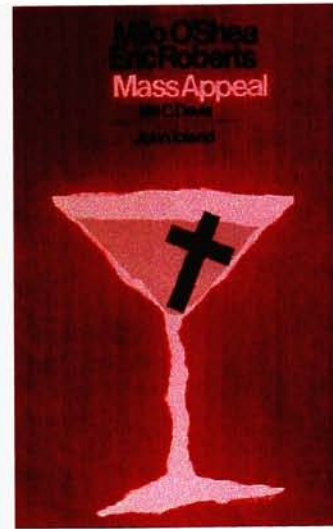
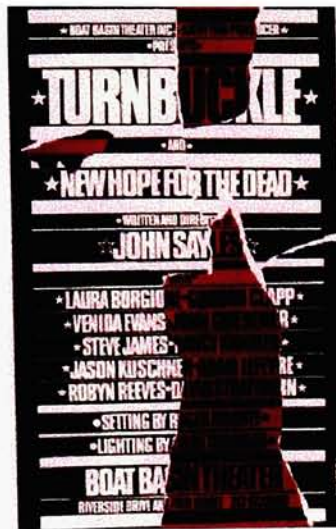


## Addition / Difference

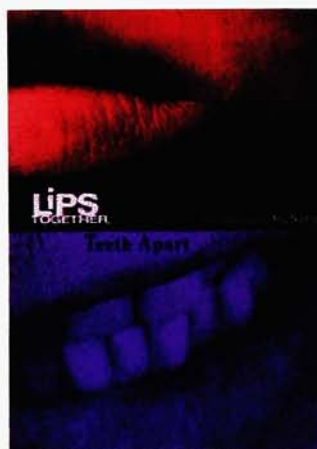
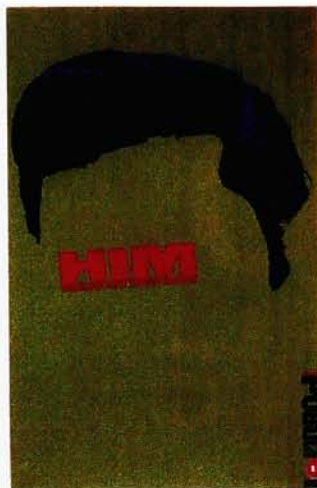
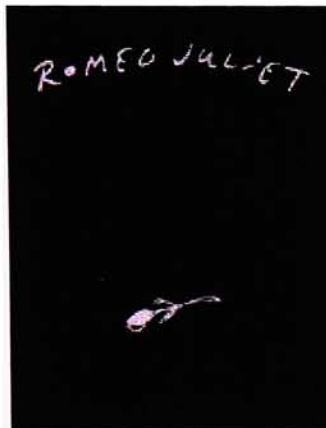




Addition / Ambiguity



Suppression/ Similarity

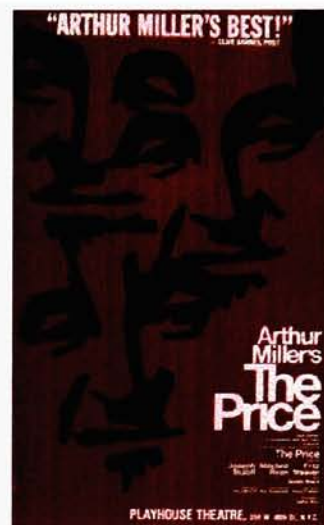
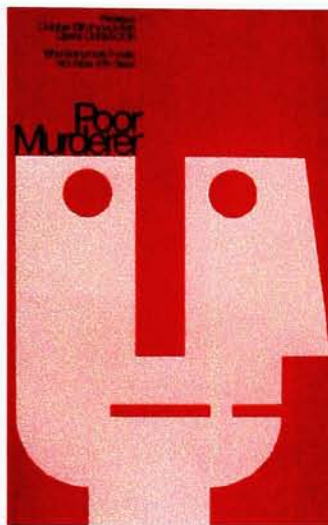
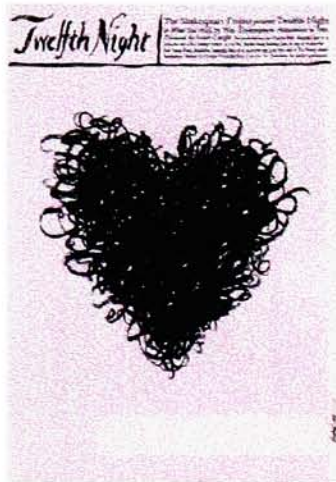


## Suppression/ Difference

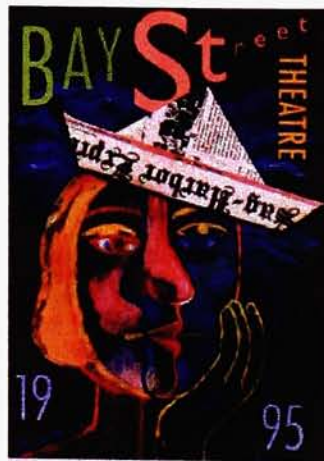
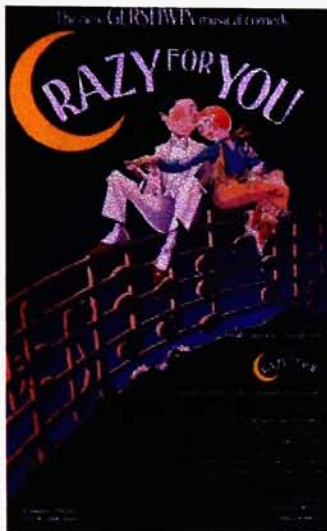




# Suppression / Ambiguity



Substitution / Similarity

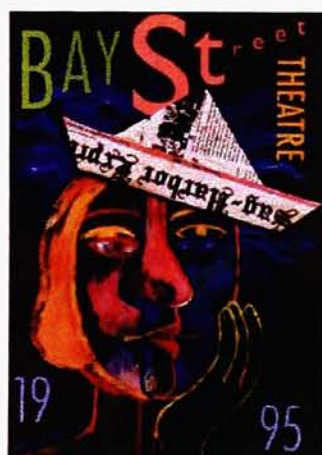


Substitution/ Difference

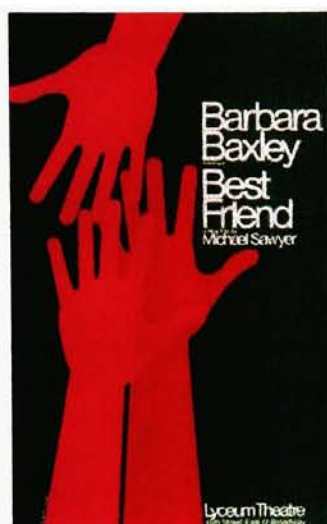




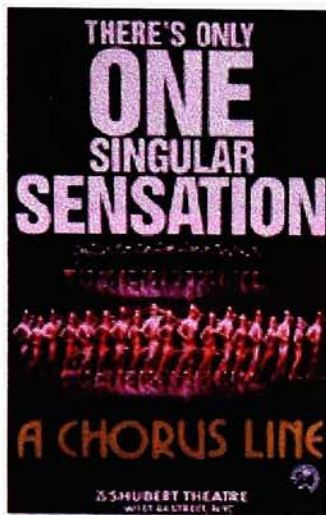
Substitution/ Ambiguity



Exange / Similarity

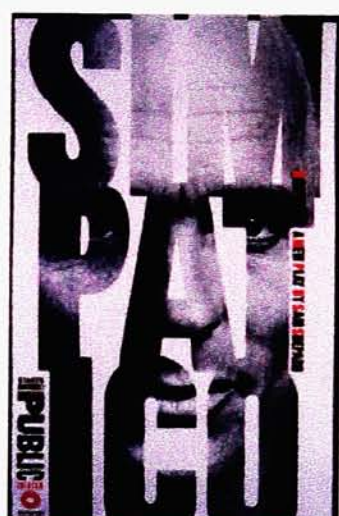
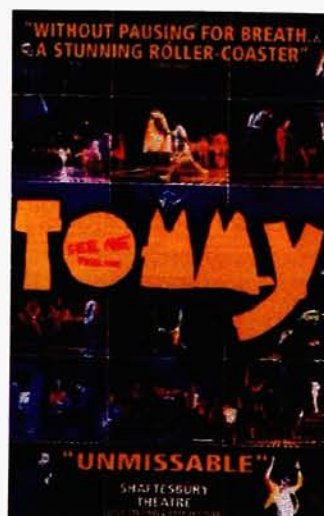
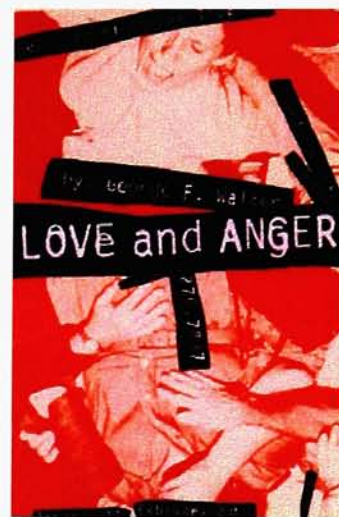
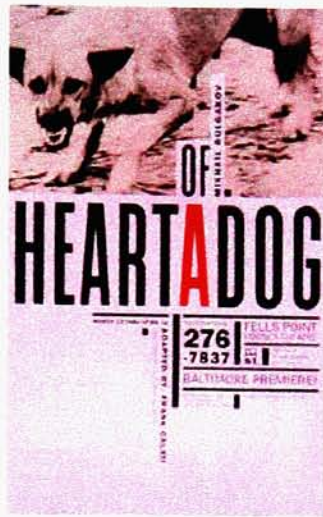


### Addition / Similarity

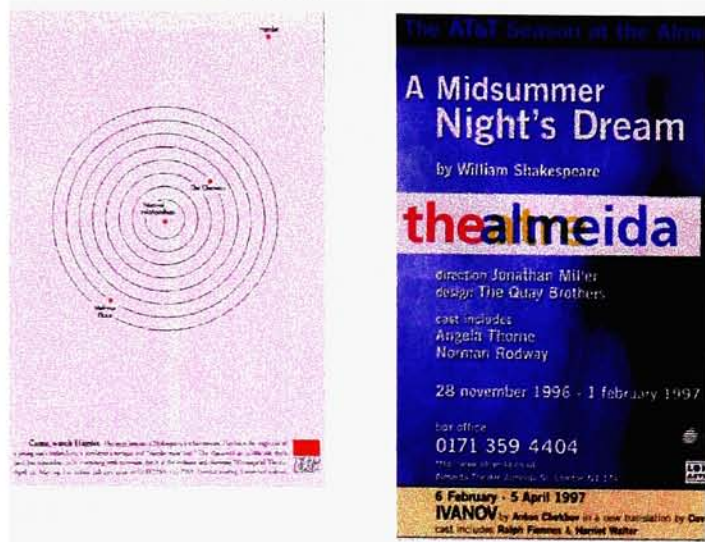




Addition / Difference



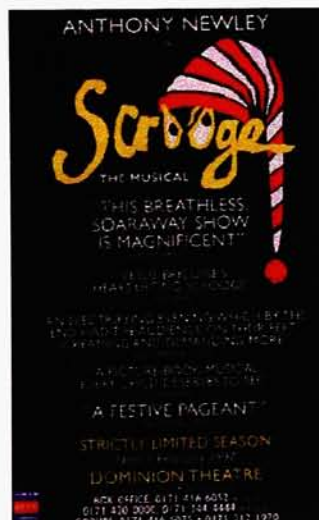
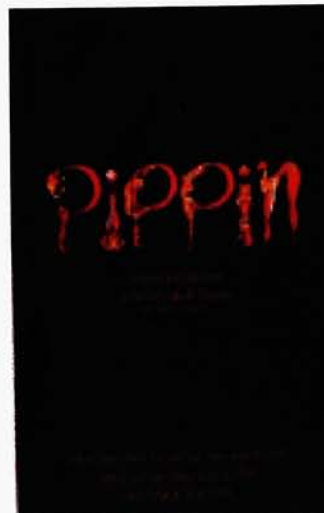
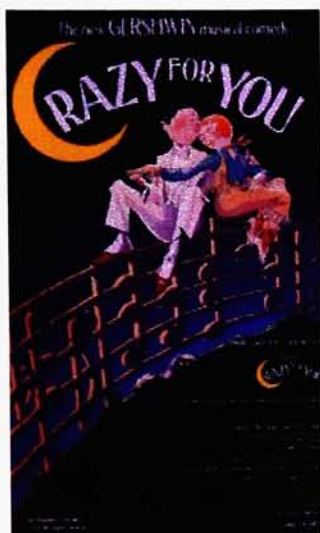
# Addition / Ambiguity



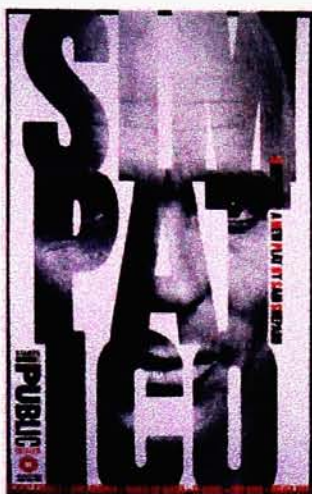
## Suppression / Ambiguity



## Substitution / Similarity

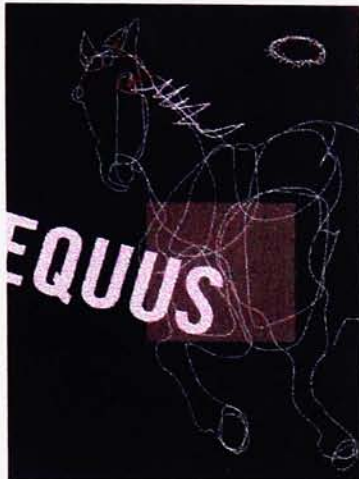


Exchange / Difference



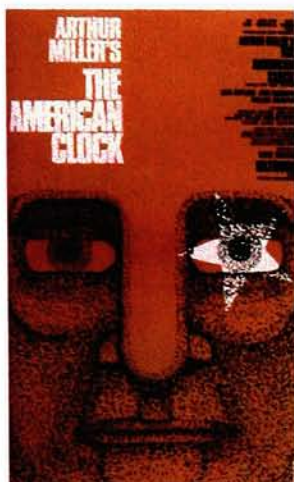


**Appendix III**  
**Interpretant Matrix**



	Paranoia	Terror
<b>Iconic</b>	Line drawing of a running horse	Running horse
<b>Indexic</b>	The title of the play "EQUUS" paints into the frightened galloping horse / a main character in the play.	Shadow of running horse
<b>Symbolic</b>	The horse drawn with wavy(paranoid) lines; the color gray – area between being normal and paranoid.	Blood from the horse eye and bloody spur.

**Comments:**



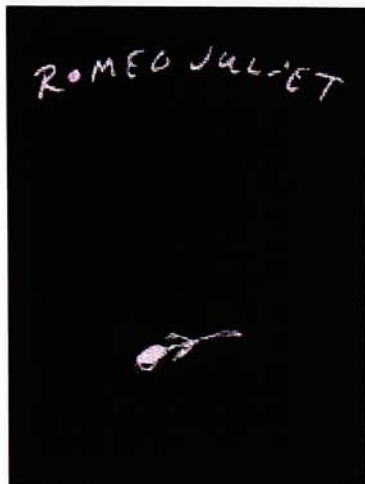
	“ The Great Depression ”	
<b>Iconic</b>	<p>The stretched-tight mouth implies unhappiness.</p> <p>Eyes look straight, as if he doesn't know what to do.</p>	
<b>Indexic</b>	<p>Shadow of the face implies depression.</p> <p>The texture of the face implies shock; because it is similar to stone.</p>	
<b>Symbolic</b>	<p>Bright star implies America</p> <p>Brown color implies the time period of The Depression (following The Gilded Age, gold color turned into dark, presented by brown)</p>	

**Comments:**



Inter-culture		
Iconic	The Japanese wears an American flag.	
Indexic	The title "Pacific Overtures" implies a culture interchanged over the Pacific Ocean.	
Symbolic	Traditional Japanese dress and American flag combine together.	

Comments:



	Tragedy	Love
<b>Iconic</b>		
<b>Indexic</b>	<p>Black background implies dead and helpless.</p> <p>The position of the pale rose implies helpless ( because the rose is floating or seems lay on nothing )</p>	<p>The way the title " Romeo and Juliet" placed (the arc shape, or circle, usually implies love or something lovely )</p>
<b>Symbolic</b>	<p>Pale rose ( usually a red rose implies love; here a pale rose implies that love hasn't the life to survive. )</p>	<p>The rose implies love.</p>

**Comments:**

**Appendix IV**  
**Generative Matrix**

	<b>Dual Personality</b>	<b>Capitalist system</b>	<b>Exploitation</b>
<b>Iconic</b> (looks like)	Shen Teh/Shui Ta Female/male	Tobacco shop/factory	Factory and people
<b>Indexic</b> (points to)	Good – Shen Teh Evil – Shui Ta	Rent Money	The smoke from factory
<b>Symbolic</b> (convention)	Mask Light/dark color	Water Smoke	Warm color – good/nurturing Cold color – evil/hard-nosed

	<b>Burden</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Poverty</b>
<b>Iconic</b> (looks like)	Shen Teh is pregnant	Shen Teh/Shui Ta	all characters (except Shu Fu)
<b>Indexic</b> (points to)	Wang sells water Yan Sun wants to fly	Trousers in yard	Rice
<b>Symbolic</b> (convention)	Shui Ta abuses people	Wedding Shui Ta pregnant	Bagging Job

	<b>Story Telling</b>	<b>Traditional belief</b>	<b>Hope / hopelessness</b>
<b>Iconic</b> (looks like)	Wang	Gods	Gods
<b>Indexic</b> (points to)	The structure of this play	Flyer wants to fly	Shen Teh pregnant Wang's hand broken
<b>Symbolic</b> (convention)	Steal/give	Hospitality	Court

## **Appendix V**

### **Evaluation**



## **Appendix V**

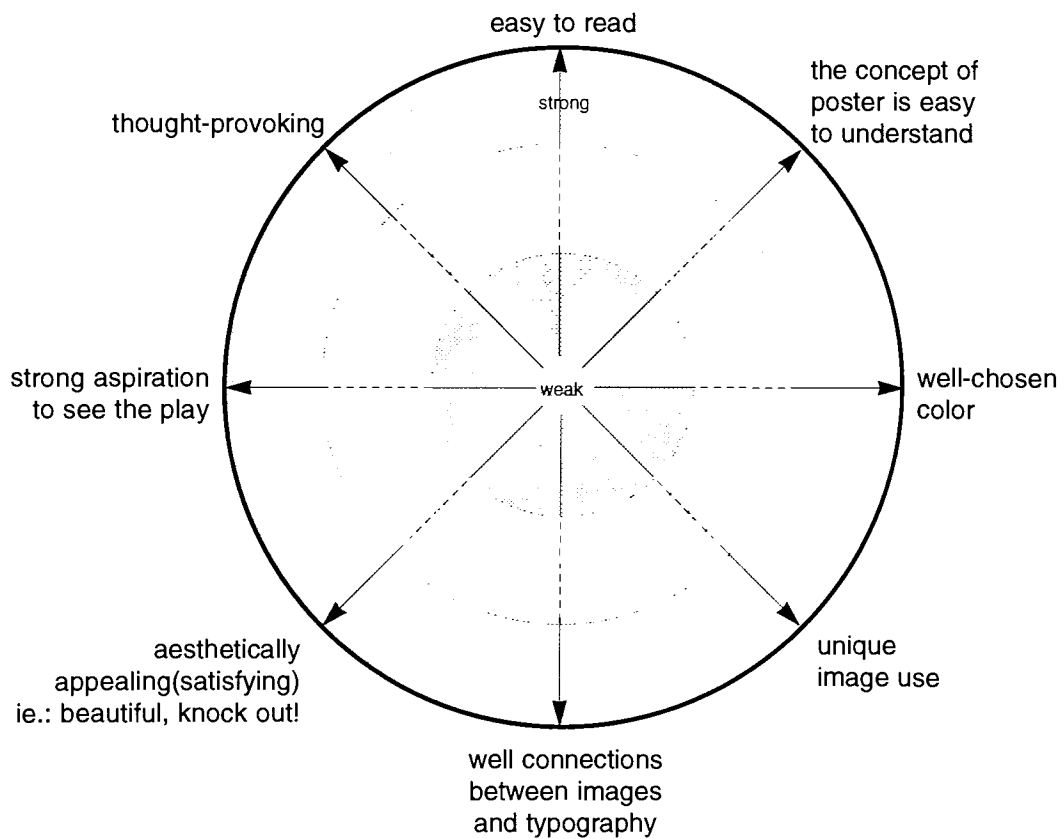
### **Evaluation**

#### Summary of Evaluation Results

**Evaluation Model of Thirds**

To summarize the data, the original circular grid was segmented into thirds as shown below.

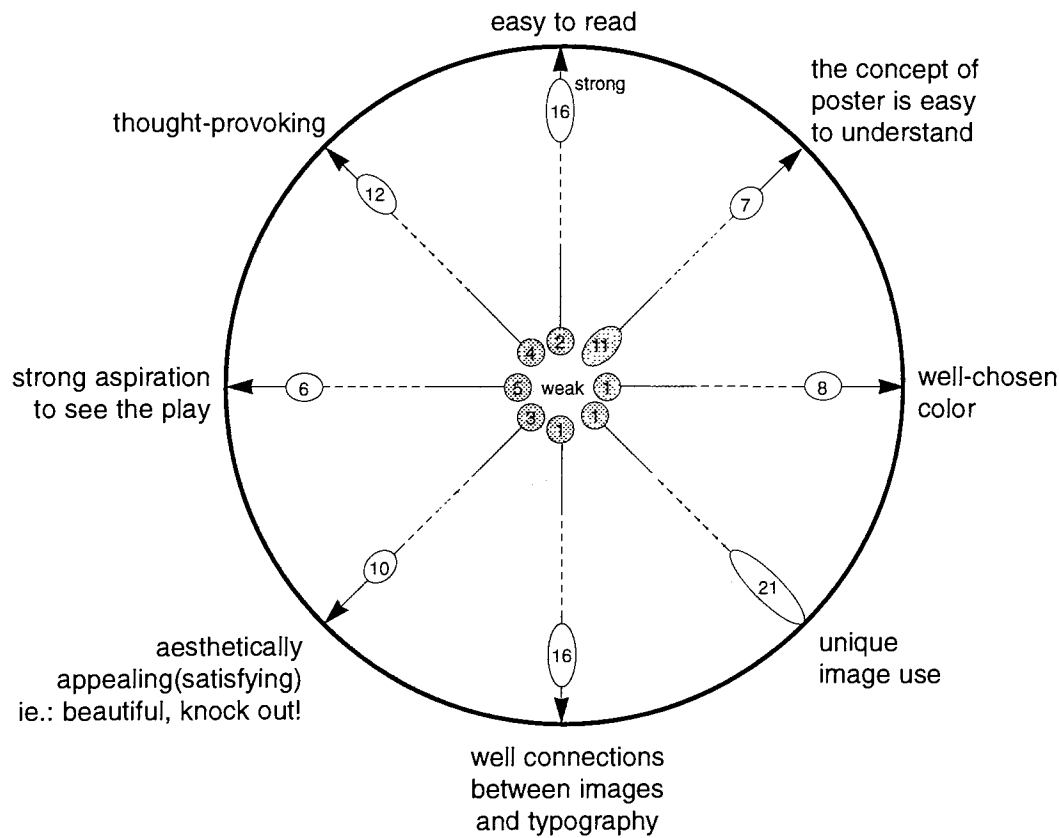
Data falling in the outer third was plotted as strong;  
data falling in the central third was plotted as weak;  
data falling in the middle section was plotted as ignored.



There were a total of 26 people interviewed in this evaluation. The number indicated in each oval represents the number of people who answered weak/strong to the corresponding questions.

persons	0 - 5	6 - 10	11 15	16 - 20	21 26
strong					
weak					

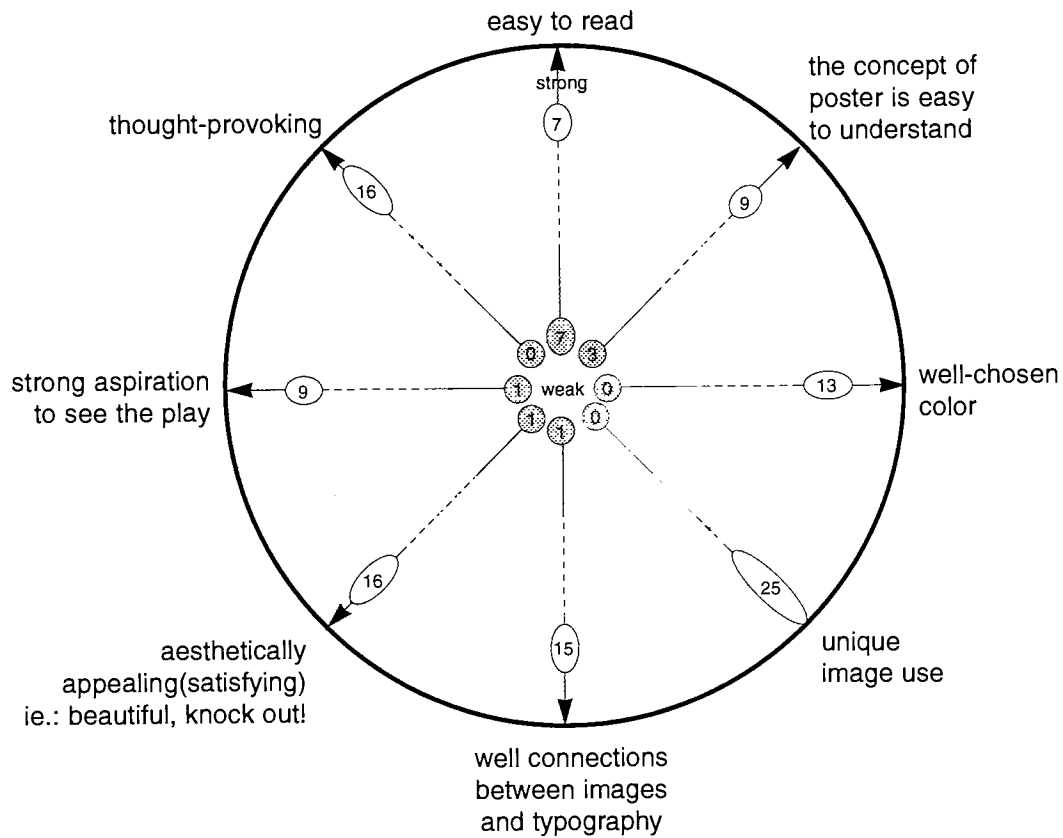
Poster One



The **strongest** part is **unique image use**.

The **weakest** part is **the concept of poster is not easy to understand**.

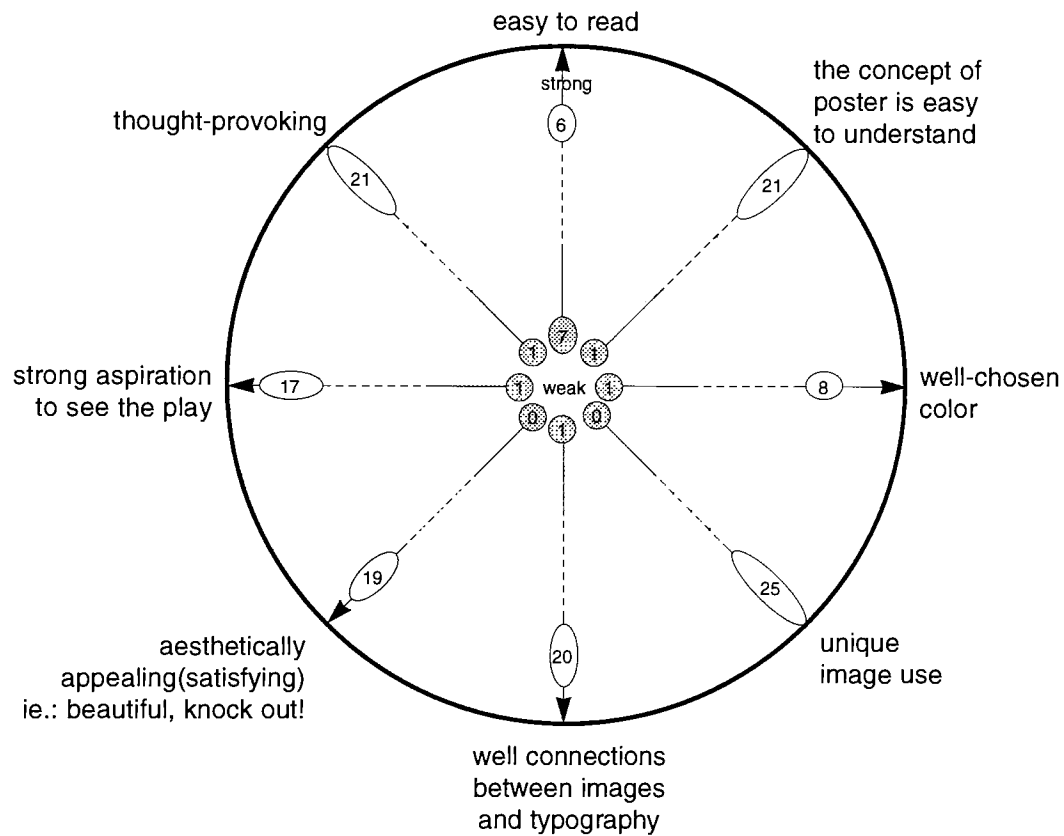
## Poster Two



The **strongest** part is **unique image use**.

The **weakest** part is **not easy to read**.

## Poster Three



The **strongest** part is **unique image use**, **the concept of poster is easy to understand** and **thought-provoking**.

The **weakest** part is **not easy to read**.

### Question 1

Which sketches make you want to go o see the play?

There are total 26 people in this evaluation. four of them chose poster two, three of them chose poster two and three, nineteen of them chose poster three.

### Question 2

Based on your answer th question 1, why these posters inspire you?

#### *Poster two*

It was aesthetically pleasing, made me want to see the play.

Because of the the oppression of good person.

Messages were clears, the type was easy to read and contained graphical information.

Caught my eyes

#### *Poster two and three*

Interesting image contrast

Images, they give a lot of information in little persons.

The business of the poster invokes thoughts.

#### *Poster three*

Poster three was the only one that made sense at all to me

Variety, Complexity and unity

More images demanding more thought

Because the people look beaten down

More interesting

More elaborate, gives clues to know

I like the multi-images

People on bottom thought provoking

This poster caries the theme of the play, the exploited people. It is easy to understand.

Because it is dynamic, it shows the effect the story has on the characters.

I think the factory image portrays the play well.

More information about the play.

It has images that are pretty and easy to understand

I like the imagery, it was thought provoking, eye catching

More to look at, I'd be more likely to pick it out of many posters to read.

shows two faces and like images of turmoil

It has images that are pretty and easy to understand

I like the imagery, it was thought provoking, eye catching

More to look at, I'd be more likely to pick it out of many posters to read.

Shows two faces and like images of turmoil

Shows well of the theme of the play

It's the most clear to me.

### Question 3

What do you think is the main concept of this play?

Society

Someone who takes a burden upon himself—his life

I'm not sure, not enough information was offered.

Struggle between good/bad

Duality

Something about a person who revolunizes factory worker

Good topic

Torture, oppression

Repression of people

People get between down, oppression

men and woman

Duality

I think the main concept is the abuse that workers live in a factory or capitalistic society

Exploitation

Two persons in one body and hard workers

exploitation

Exploitation in factory

Exploitation

Exploitation, day to day toil

exploitation and hardship

exploitation of people

Struggle of tobacco workers

### Question 4

Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play?

Thought provoking, dramatic

martyrdom – stoic sadness

I have no idea

Good/bad

Confusion

Sadness, hardship, struggle

Serous and ?misfortmale

Confusion, fear, sadness

Struggle, depression

Sadness, worthlessness

Oppression, sex

Good and bad

Oppression

I think the emotions are sadness and frustration

Gloom and doom, mostly dark emotions with a few glimmers of hop and light

Depression

Sorrow

Sad, heavy and work hard

Confusion

Pain, struggle

Happiness hurt betrayal

### Question 5

What are your suggestions for improvement?

Seems to work fine.

Fewer words

Change type face, try different symbols to convey information

Make the small text more readable

More color variety

Look good

Make the ...

more distinct type

Get rid of smoke

Large print, refill the man/woman

Bigger font, a one liner

Bigger print

Bigger text

Try other color combination

Make the poster easier to read and work on the face/chest/belly outline

change colors

different colors

Don't make them so abstract.

They are harder to understand when you have to start at the picture the figure.

The color, you should change it

Bigger type with most of poster three

Make little people bigger

larger print



## **Appendix V**

### **Evaluation**

Examples of Blank Evaluation Forms

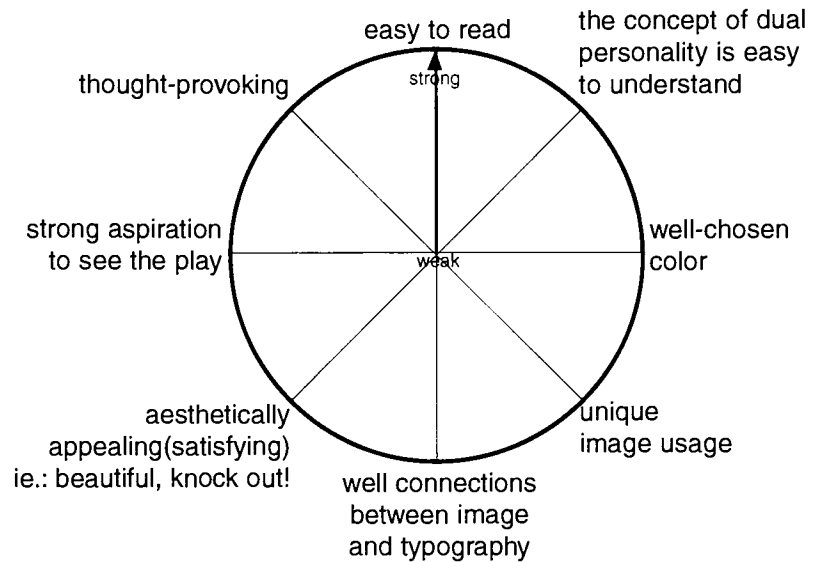
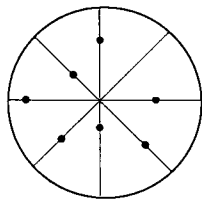
## Intermediate Evaluation

- ☐ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



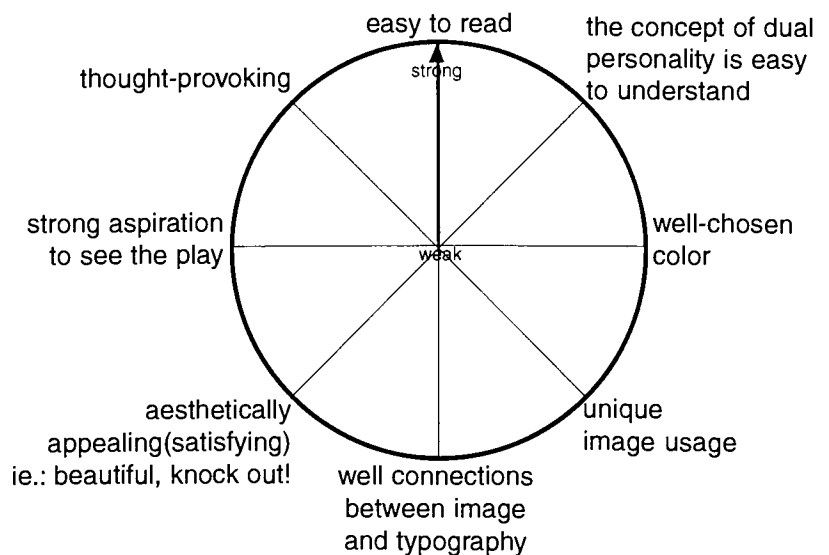
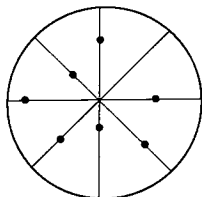
## Intermediate Evaluation

- ☐ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



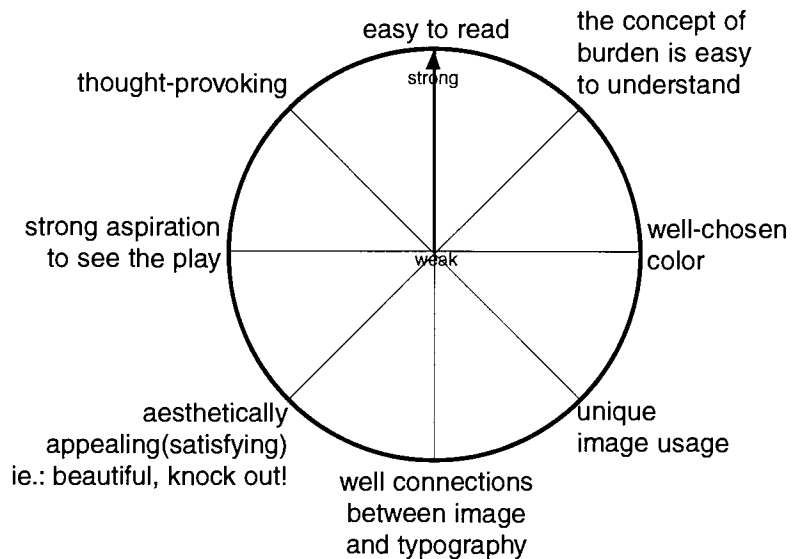
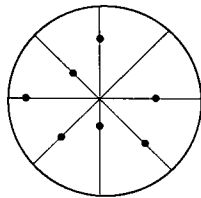
## Intermediate Evaluation

- ☐ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



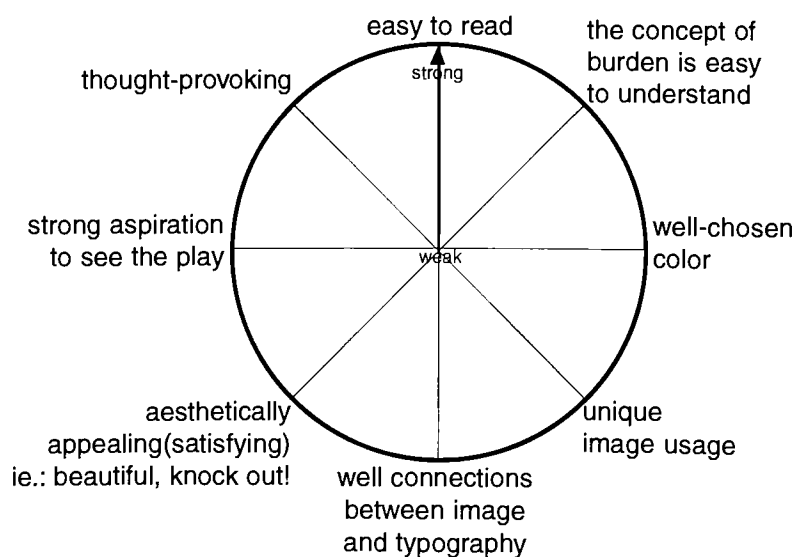
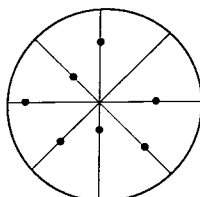
## Intermediate Evaluation

- ☐ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



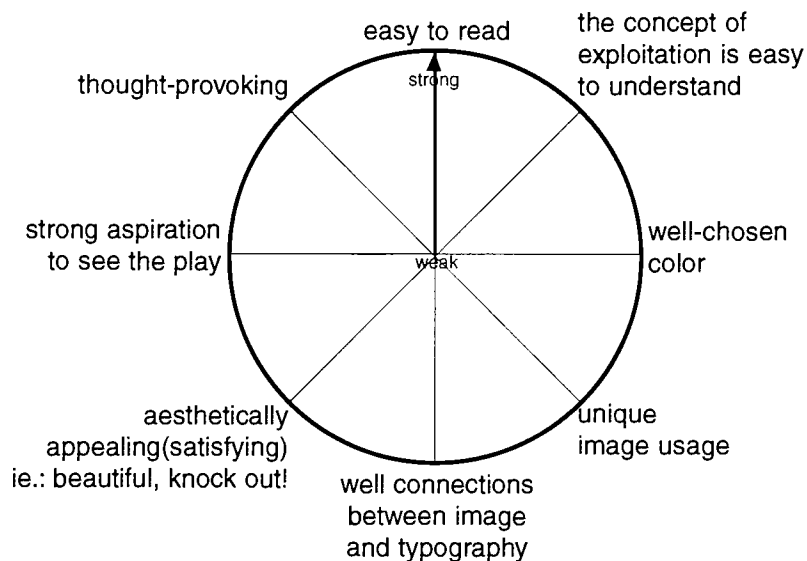
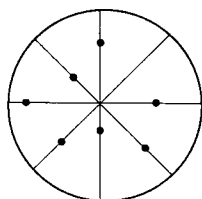
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

- ☐ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



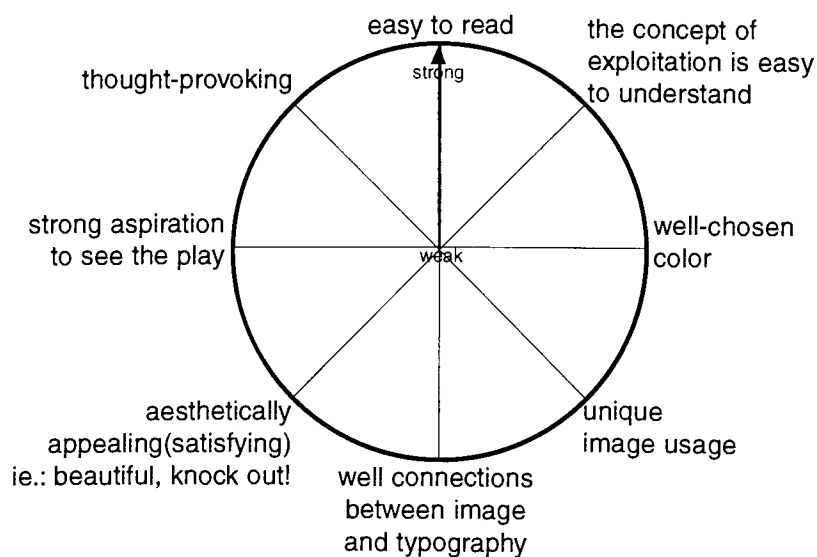
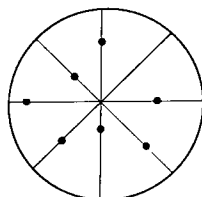
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

- ☐ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



**Intermediate Evaluation**

**Please Answer the following questions:**

- 1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?  
Poster A    Poster B    Poster C
- 2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?
- 3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?
- 4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?
- 5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?

**Intermediate Evaluation**

**Please Answer the following questions:**

- 1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?  
Poster A    Poster B    Poster C
- 2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?
- 3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?
- 4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?
- 5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?

## **Appendix V**

### **Evaluation**

Evaluation Forms From Interviewed People

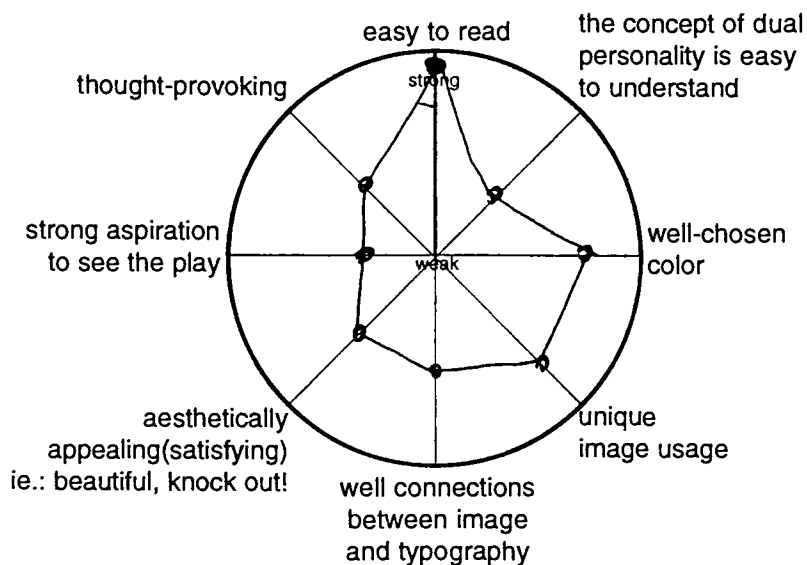
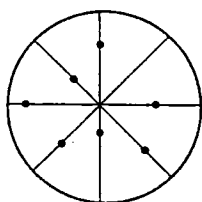
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

✓ I am familiar with this play  
 — I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



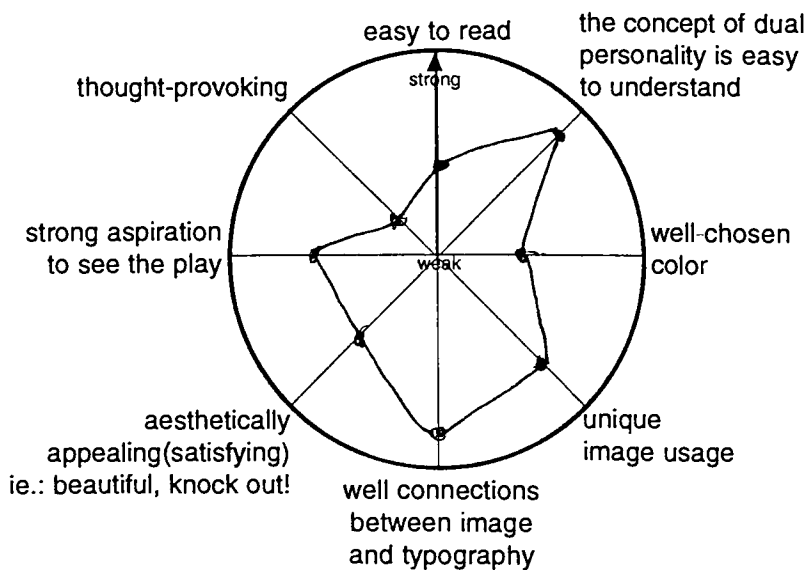
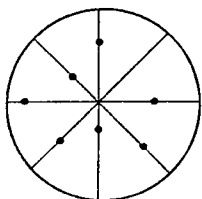
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

✓ I am familiar with this play  
 — I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



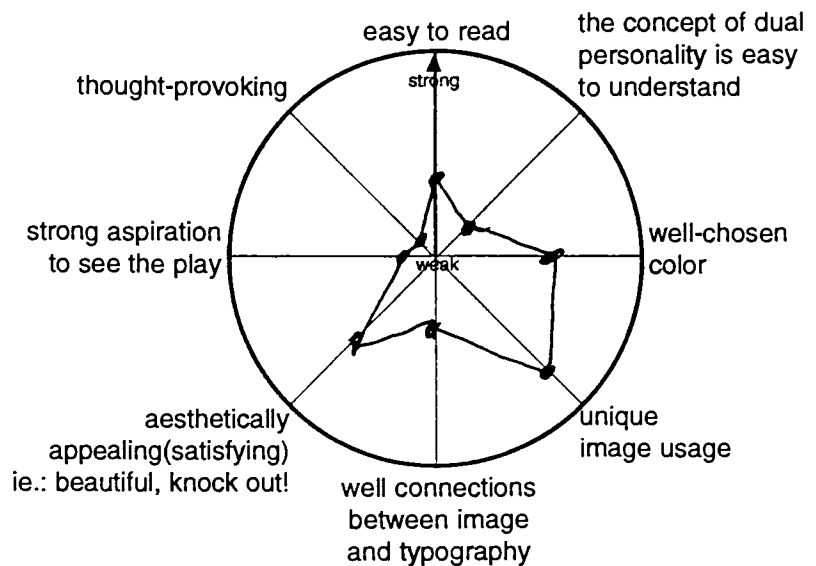
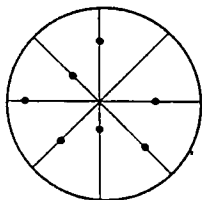
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

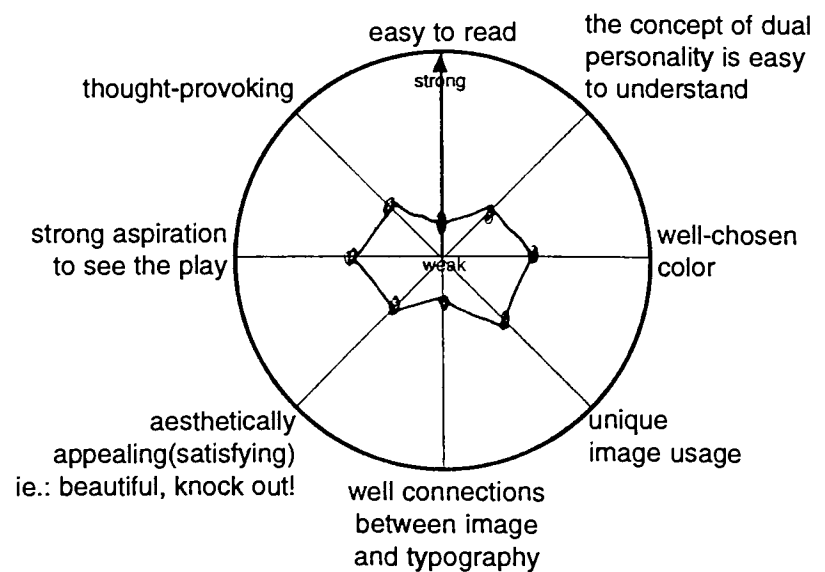
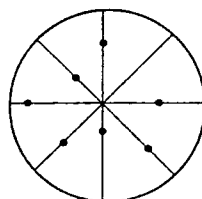
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:





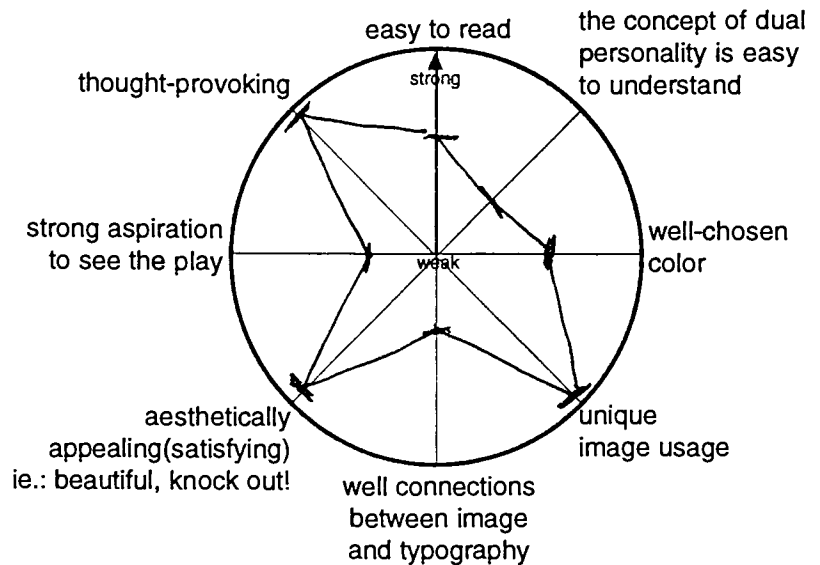
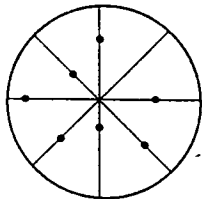
Intermediate Evaluation

POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



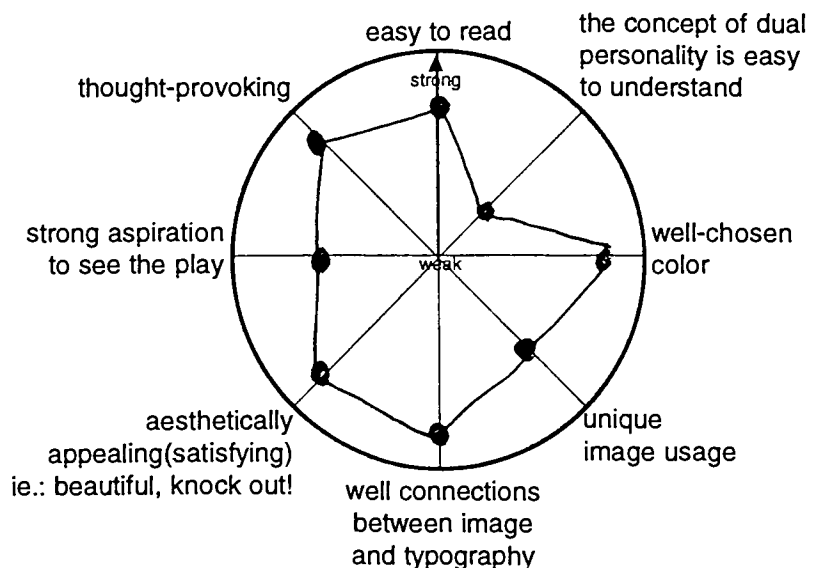
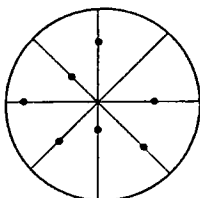
Intermediate Evaluation

POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



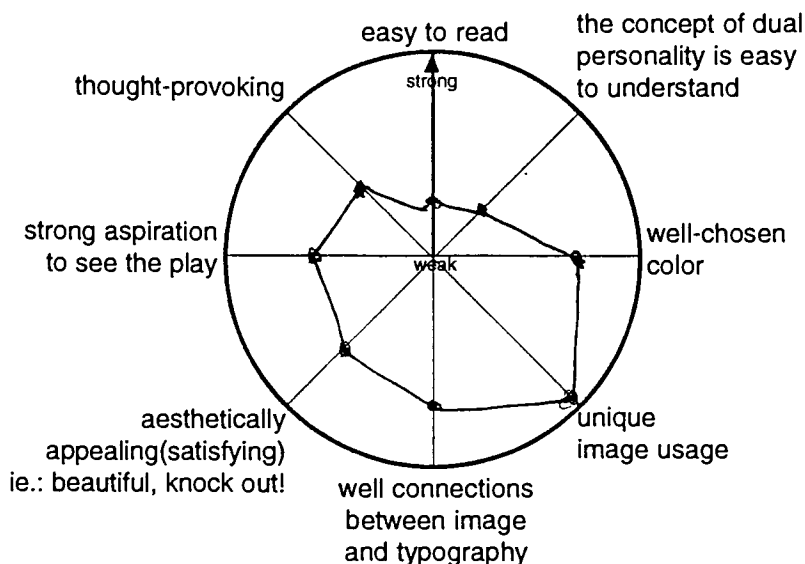
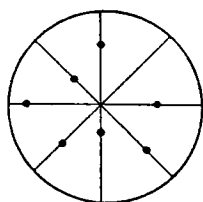
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

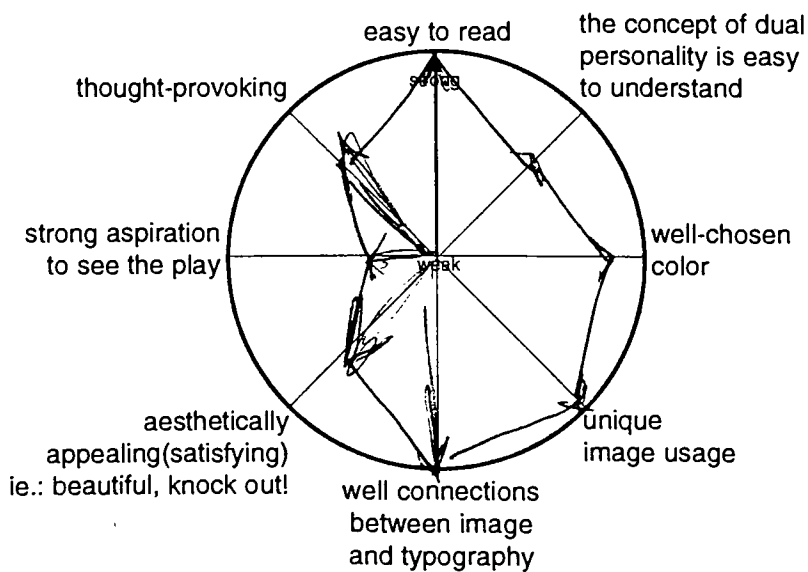
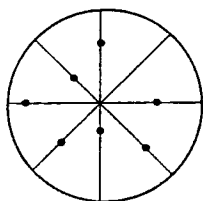
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



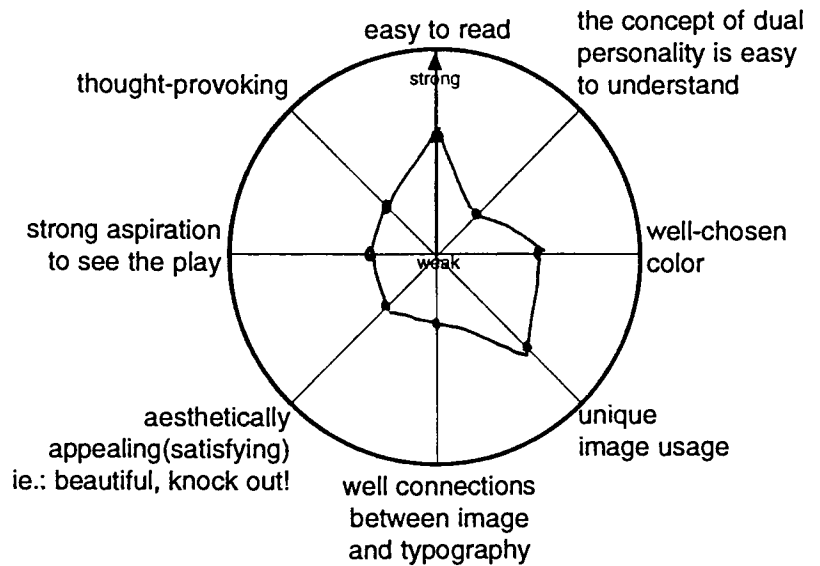
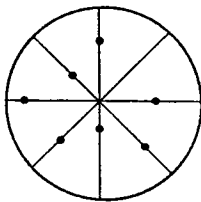
Intermediate Evaluation

POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



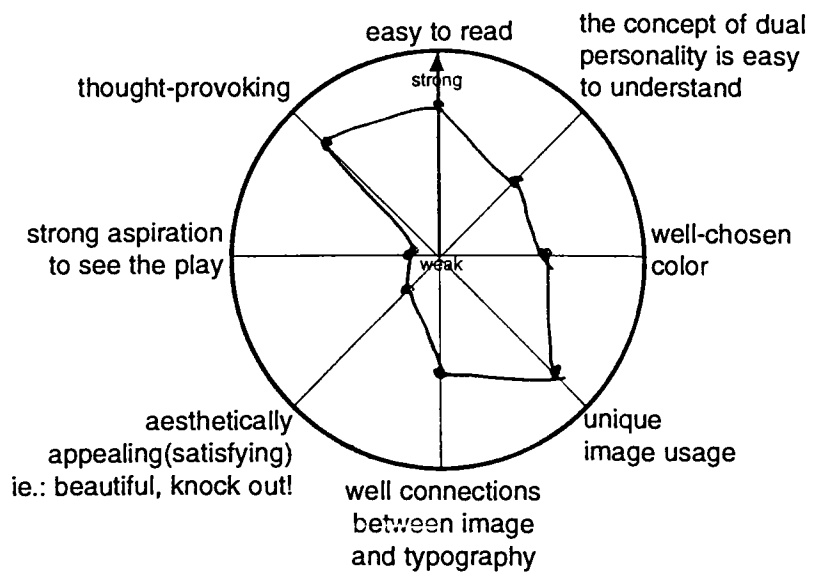
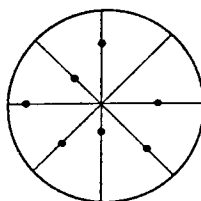
Intermediate Evaluation

POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☐ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



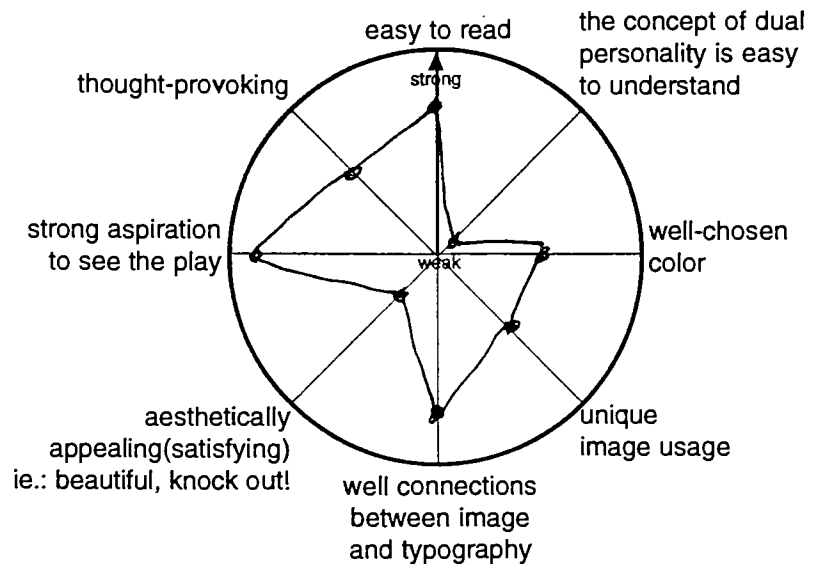
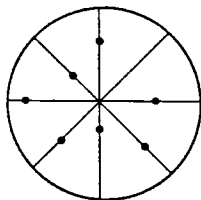
Intermediate Evaluation

POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

— I am familiar with this play  
~~—~~ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



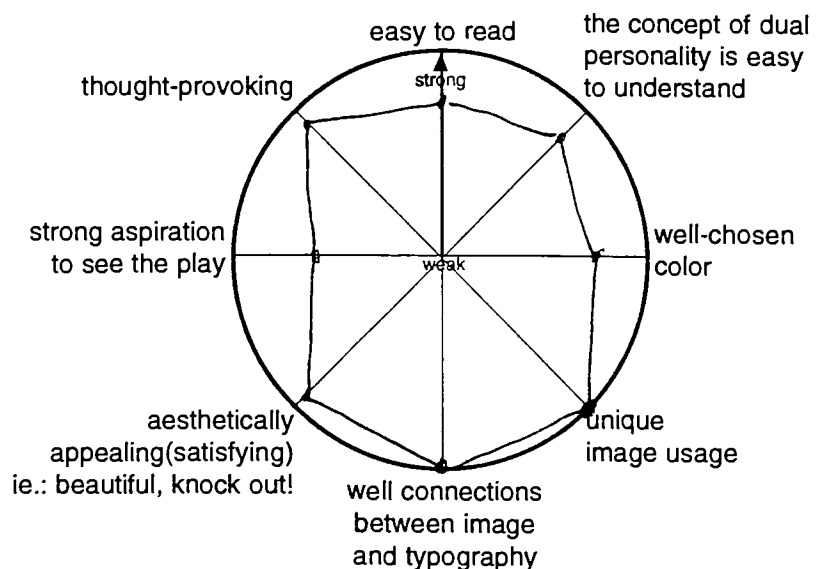
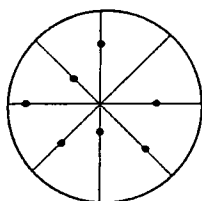
Intermediate Evaluation

POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

— I am familiar with this play  
~~—~~ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



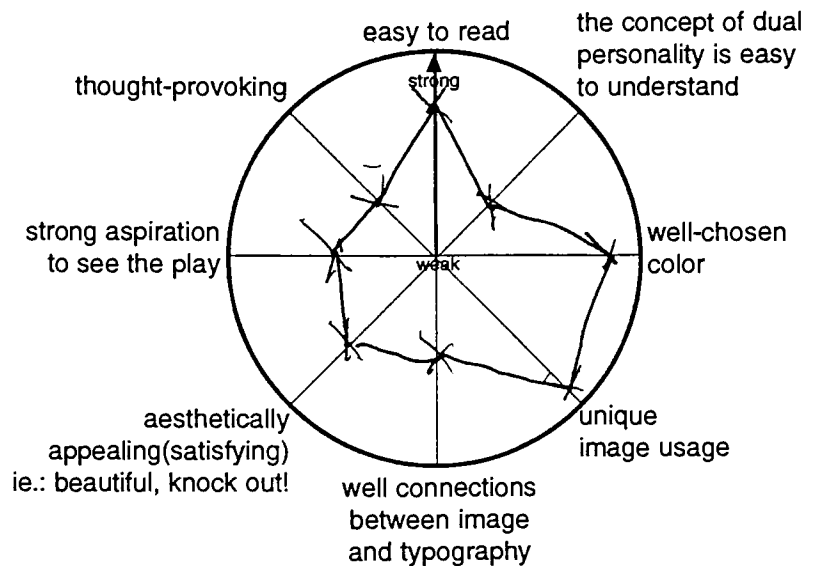
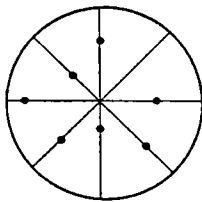
## Intermediate Evaluation

### POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

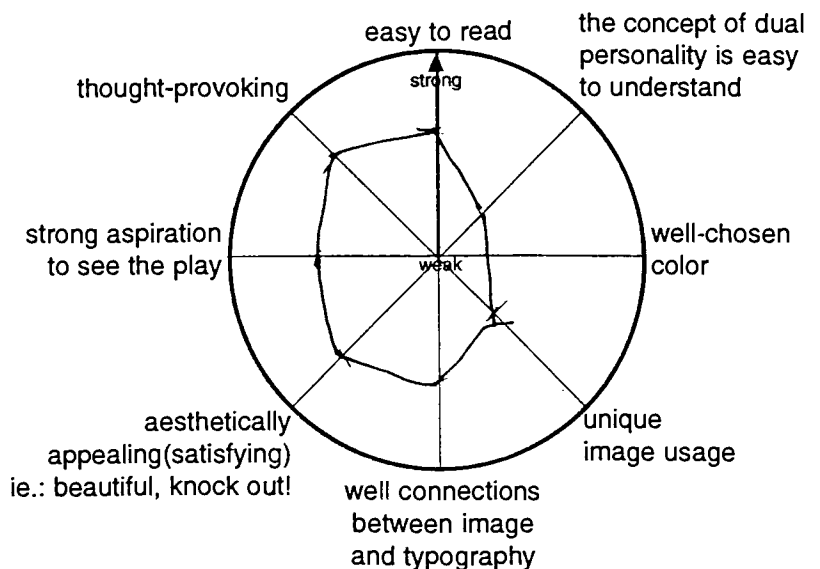
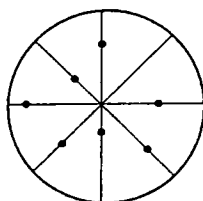
## Intermediate Evaluation

### POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☐ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



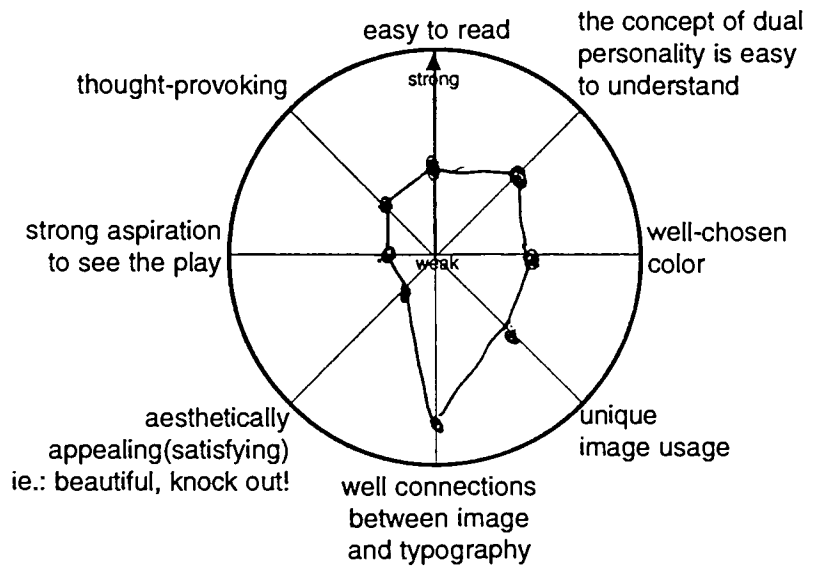
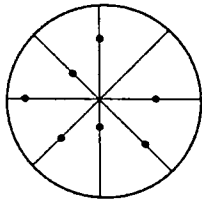
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

- I am familiar with this play  
 ✕ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

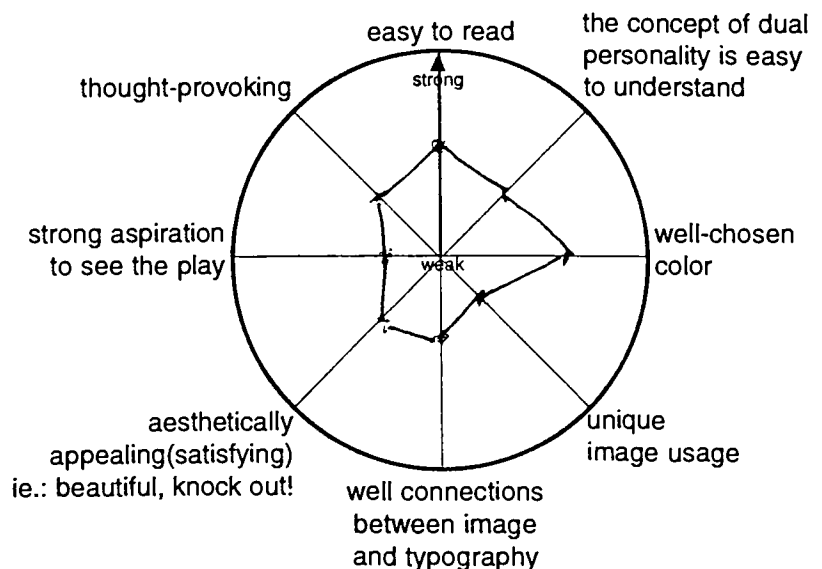
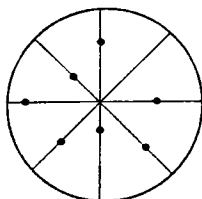
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

- I am familiar with this play  
 ✕ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"



Example:



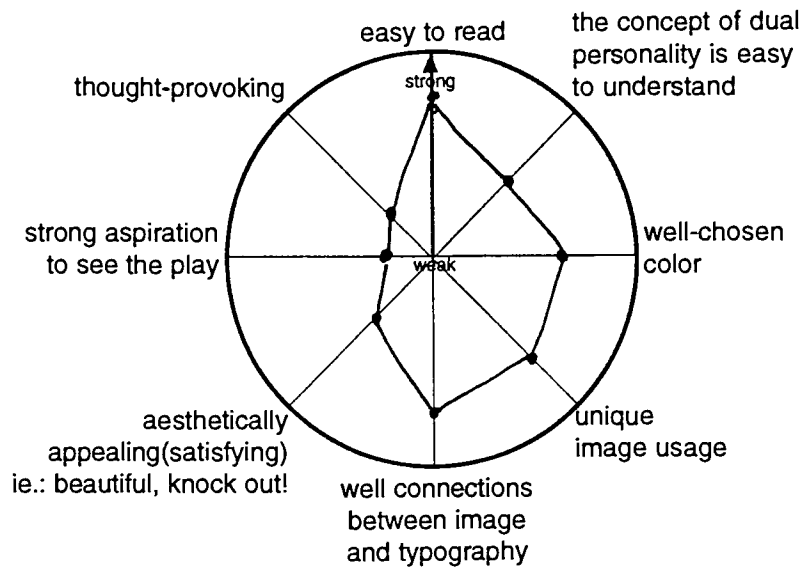
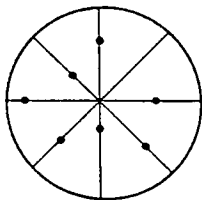
## Intermediate Evaluation

**POSTER A**

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

 I am familiar with this play  
 I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:





## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

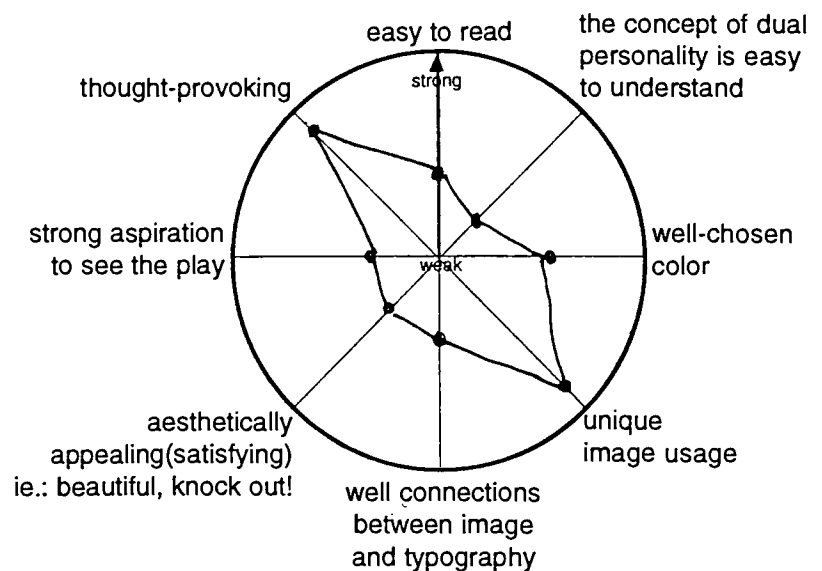
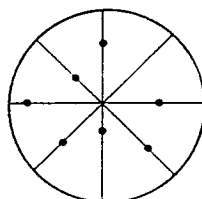
## Intermediate Evaluation

**POSTER A**

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

 I am familiar with this play  
 I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



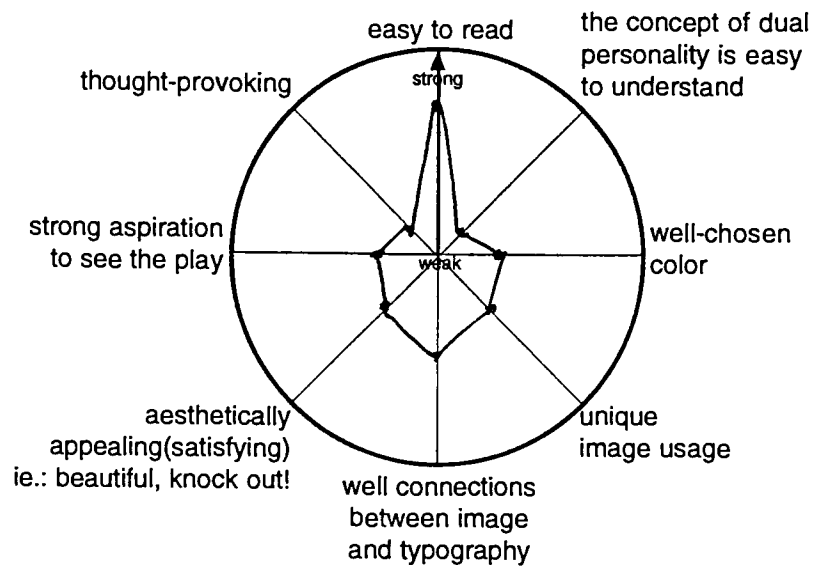
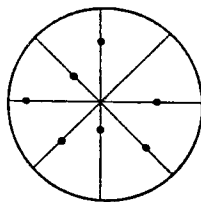
Intermediate Evaluation

POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☐ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



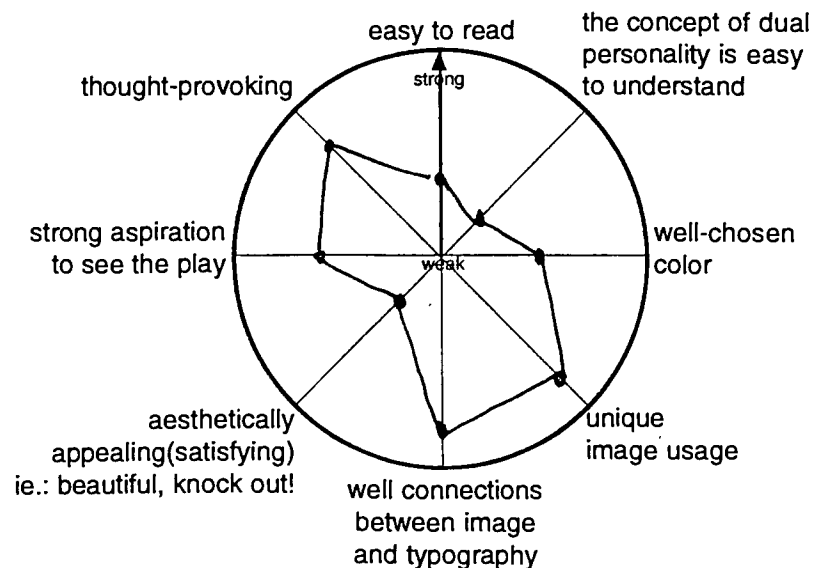
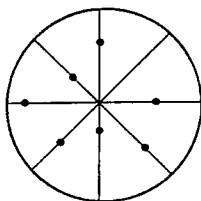
Intermediate Evaluation

POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☐ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:





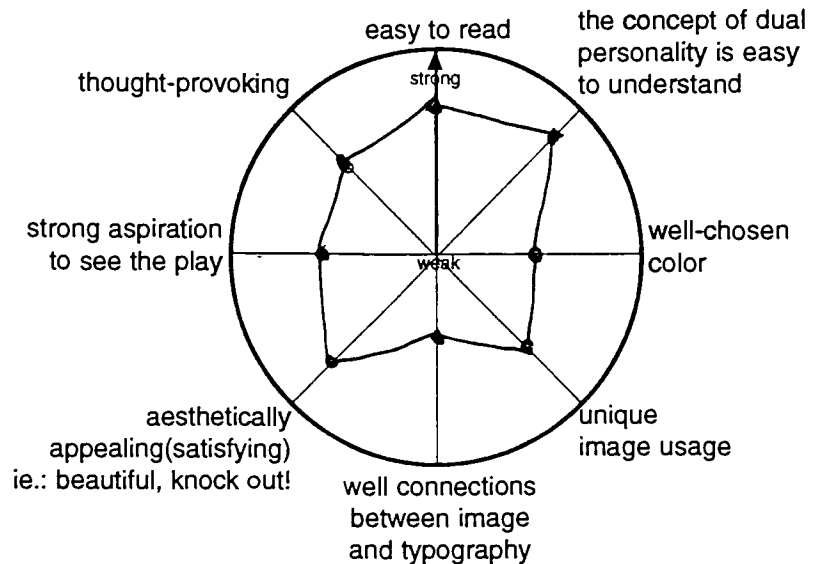
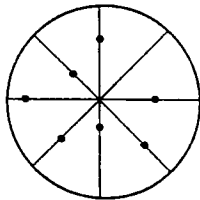
## Intermediate Evaluation

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



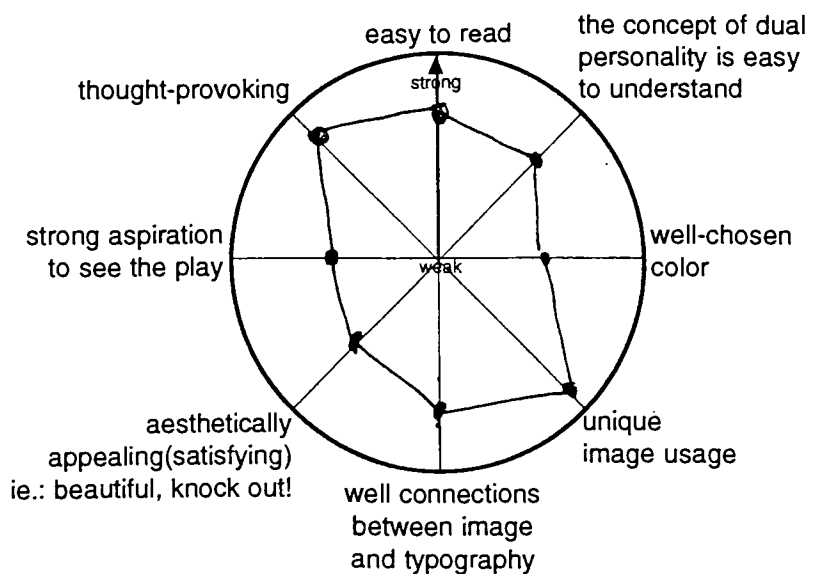
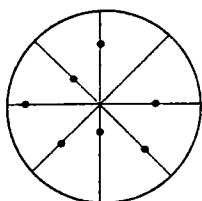
## Intermediate Evaluation

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



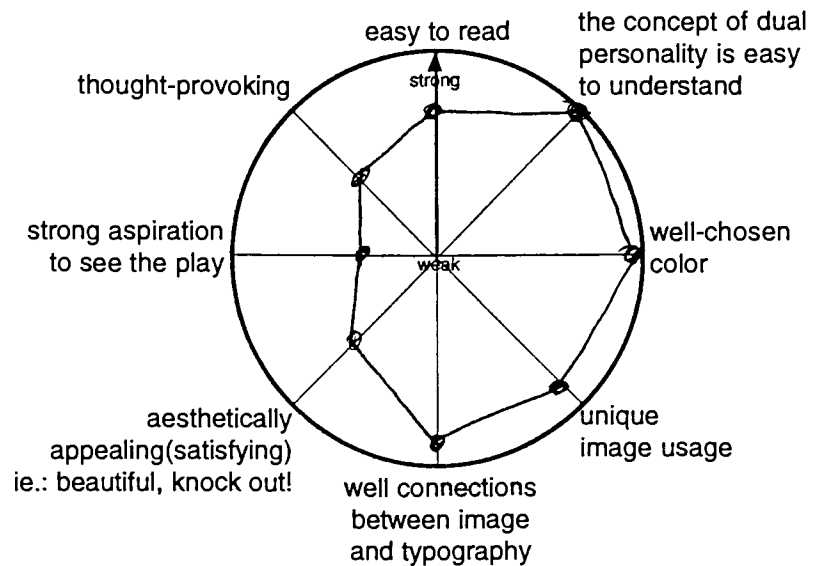
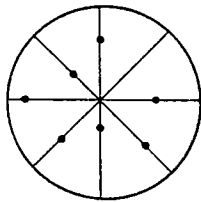
### Intermediate Evaluation

#### POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



### A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

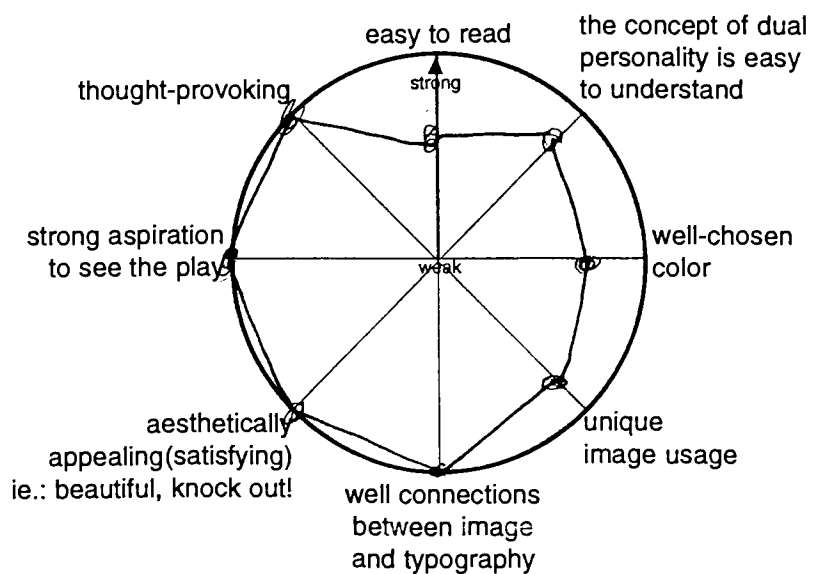
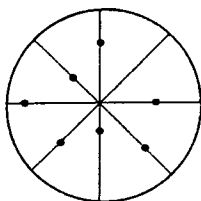
### Intermediate Evaluation

#### POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



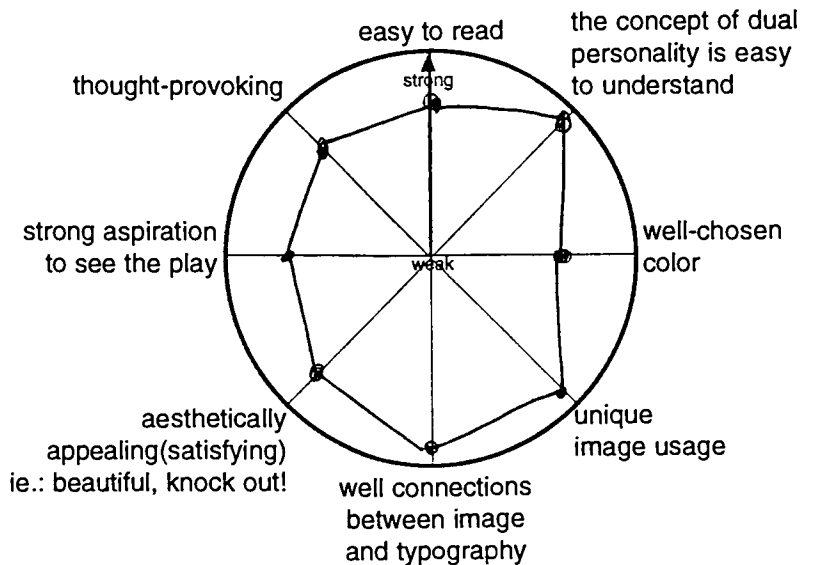
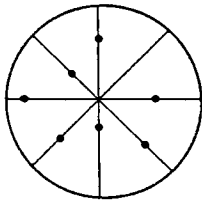
Intermediate Evaluation

POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

— I am familiar with this play  
~~—~~ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



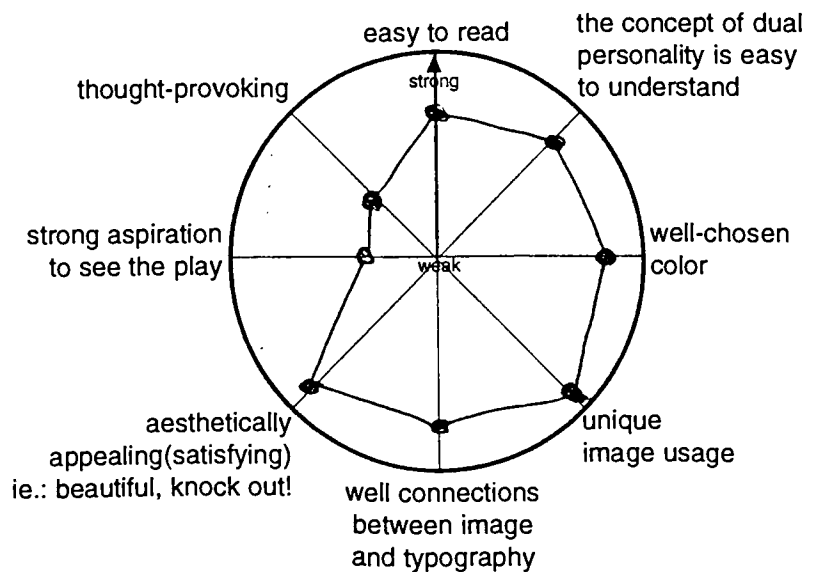
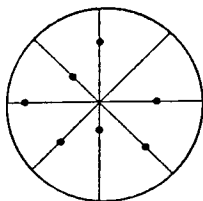
Intermediate Evaluation

POSTER A

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

— I am familiar with this play  
~~—~~ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



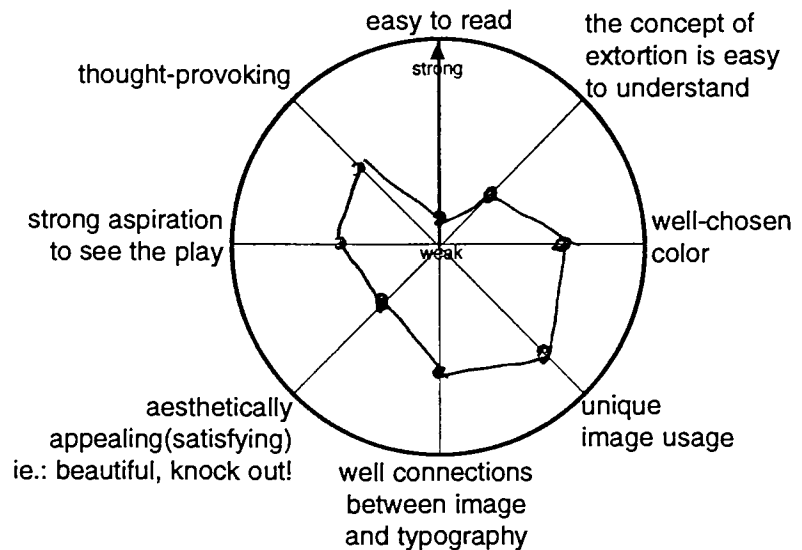
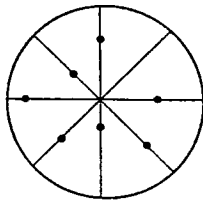
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

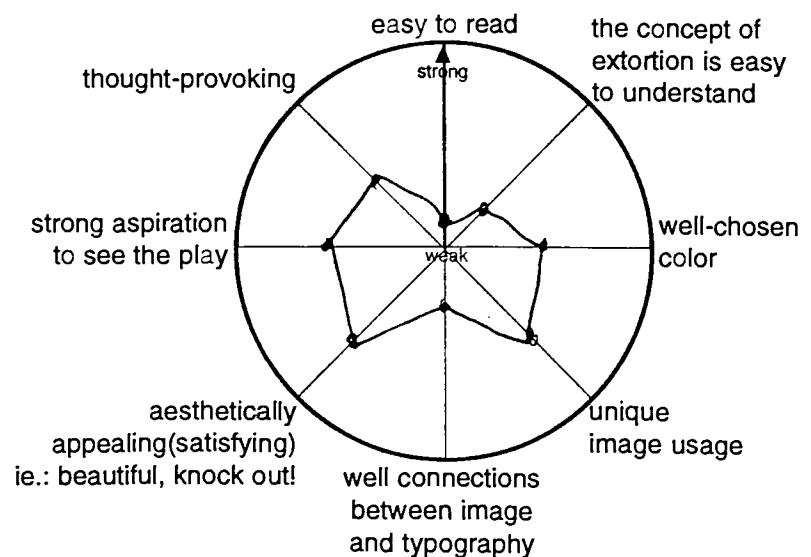
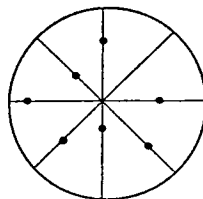
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



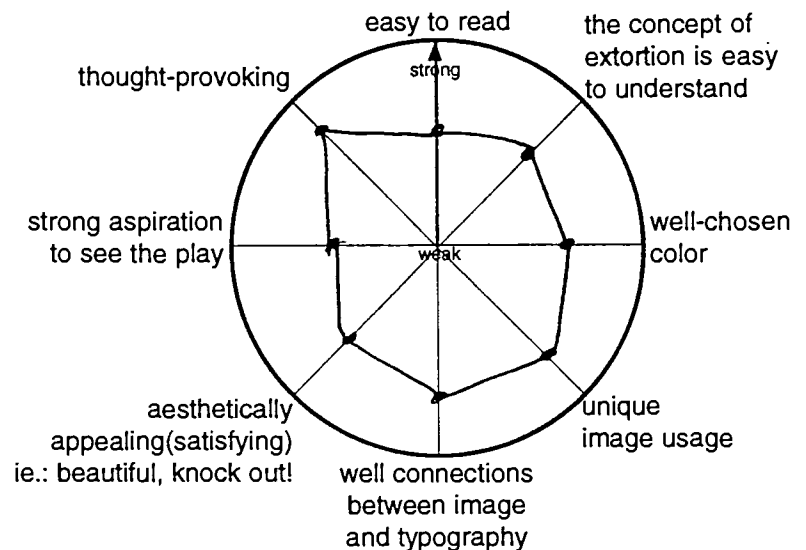
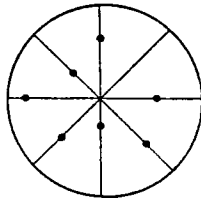
## Intermediate Evaluation

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

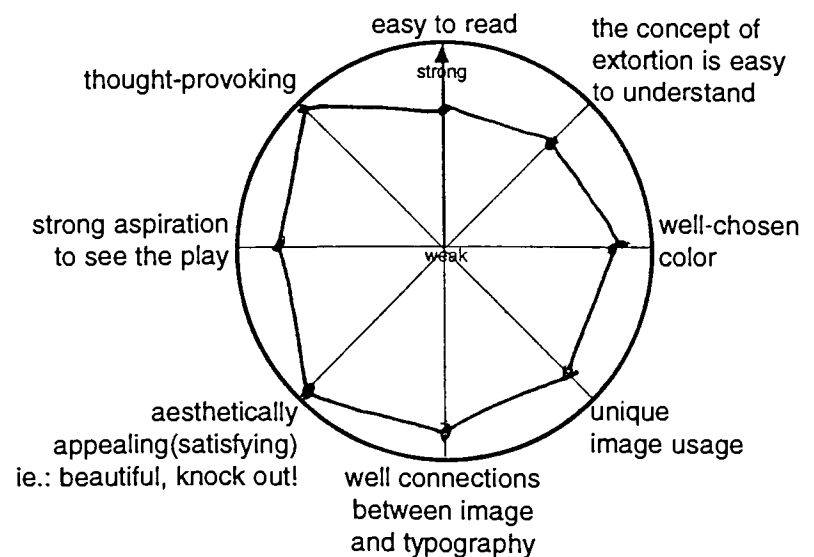
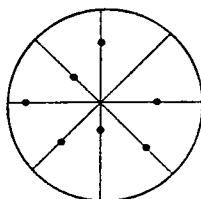
## Intermediate Evaluation

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



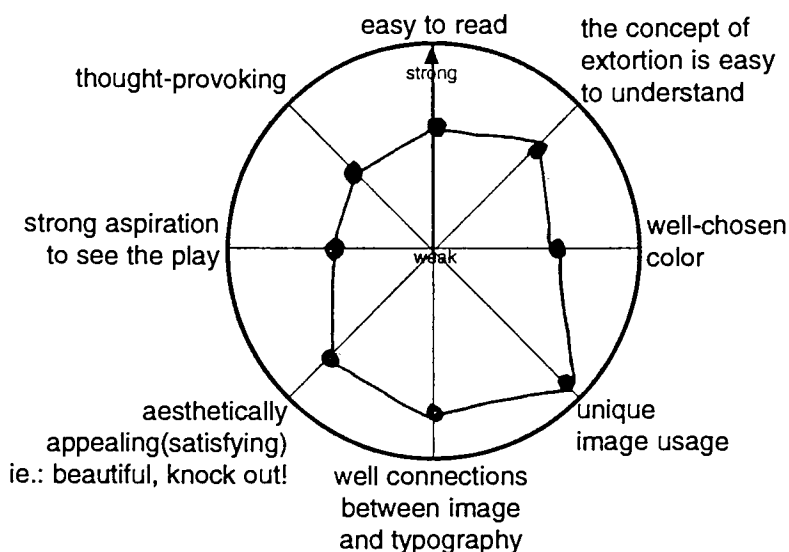
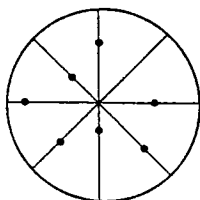
## Intermediate Evaluation

✓ I am familiar with this play  
 — I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

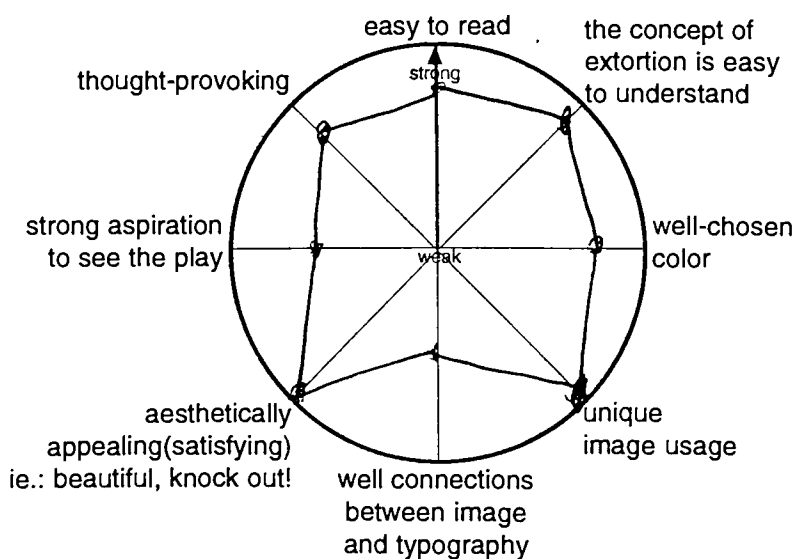
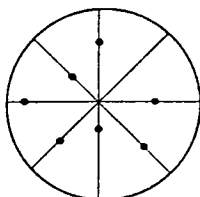
## Intermediate Evaluation

✓ I am familiar with this play  
 — I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



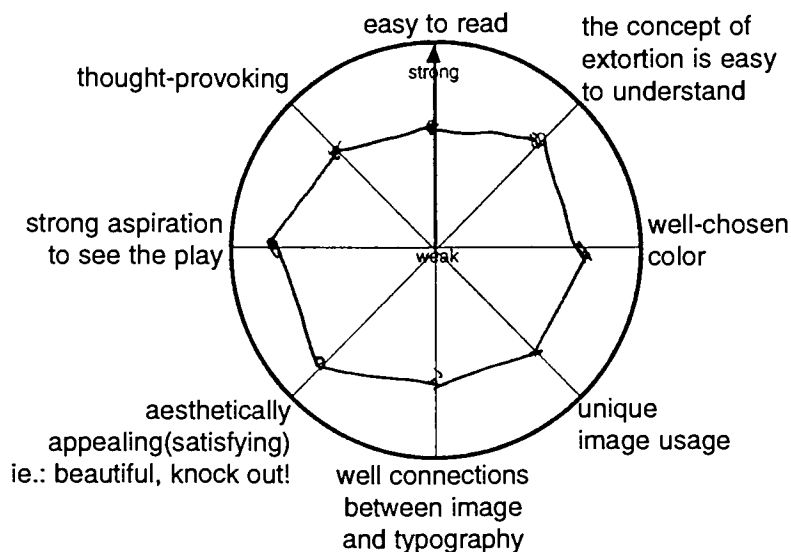
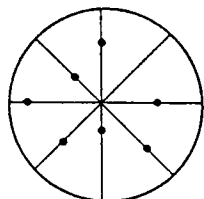
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

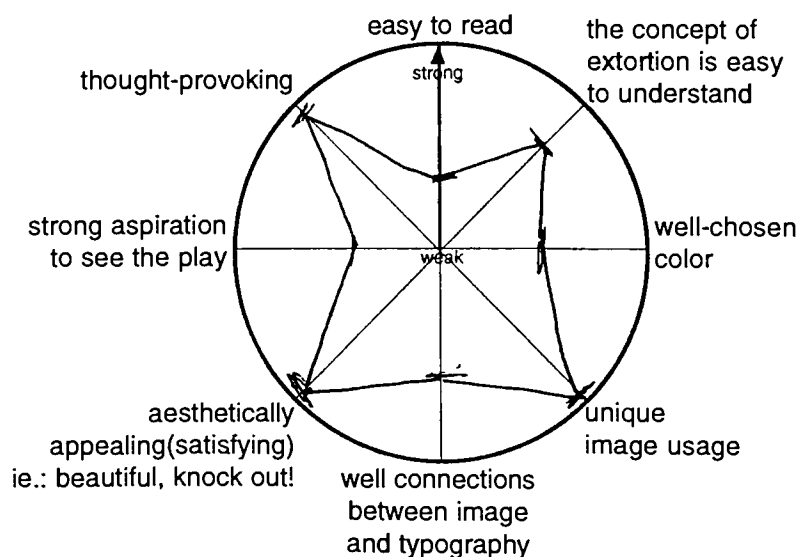
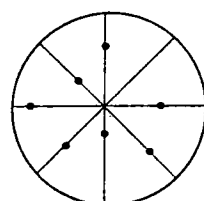
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



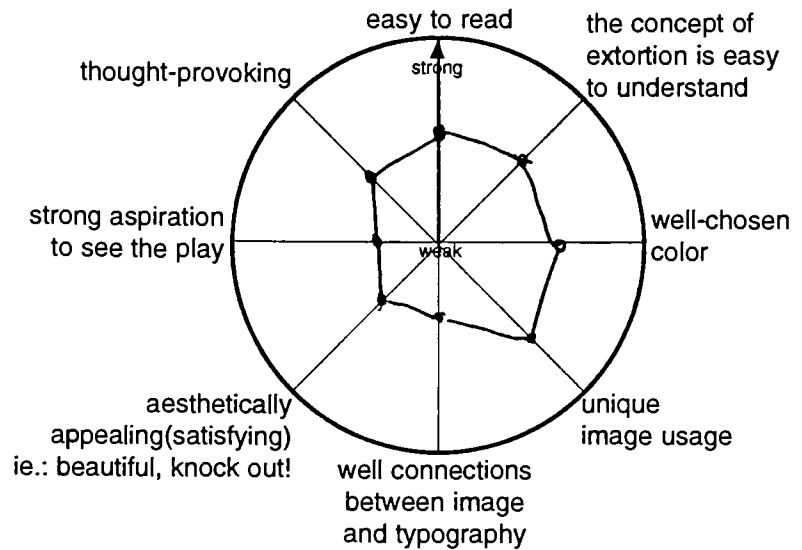
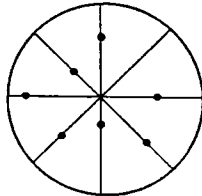
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

X I am familiar with this play  
 — I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

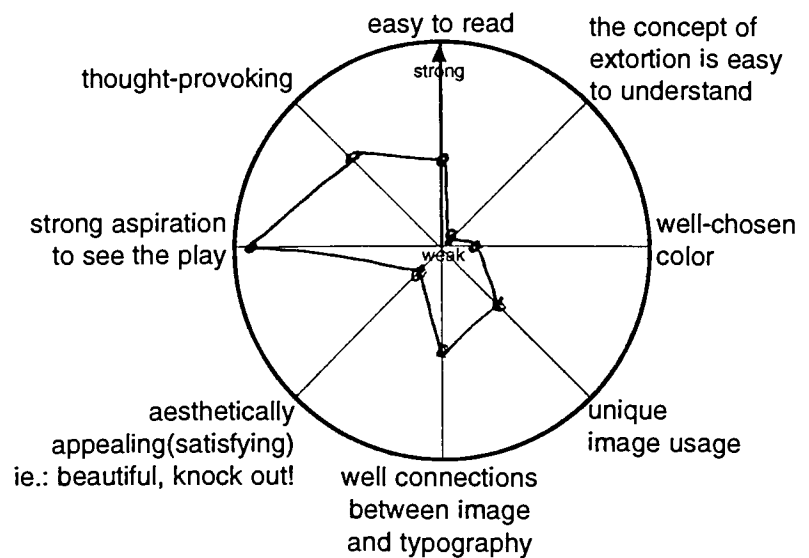
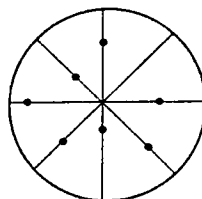
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

— I am familiar with this play  
 ✂ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:





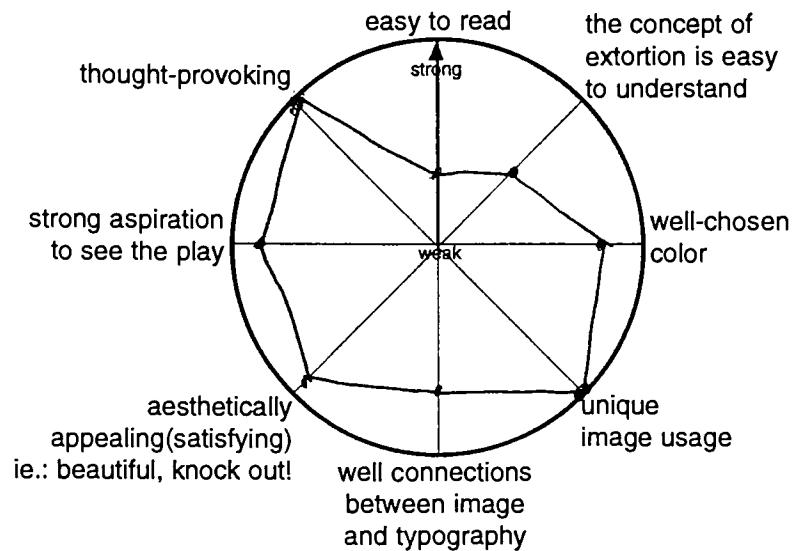
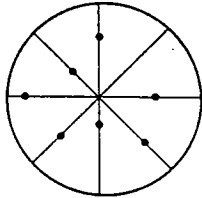
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

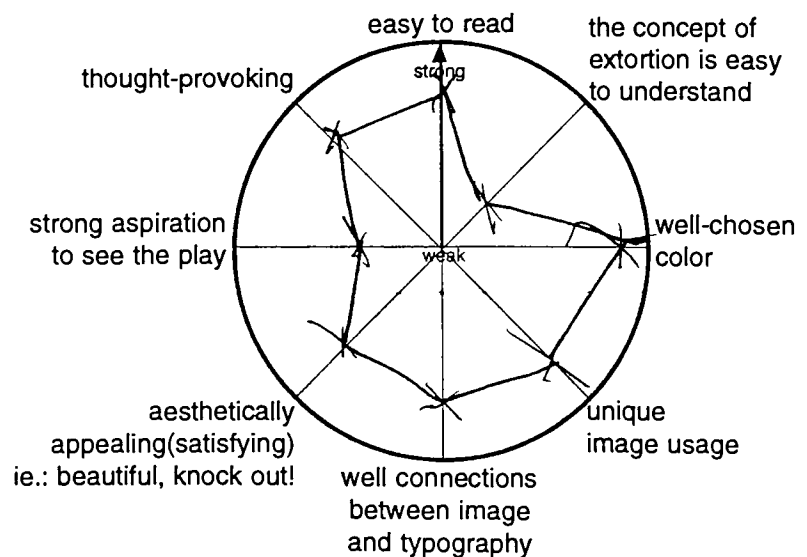
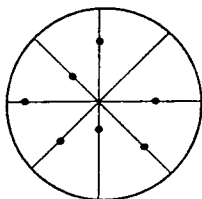
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



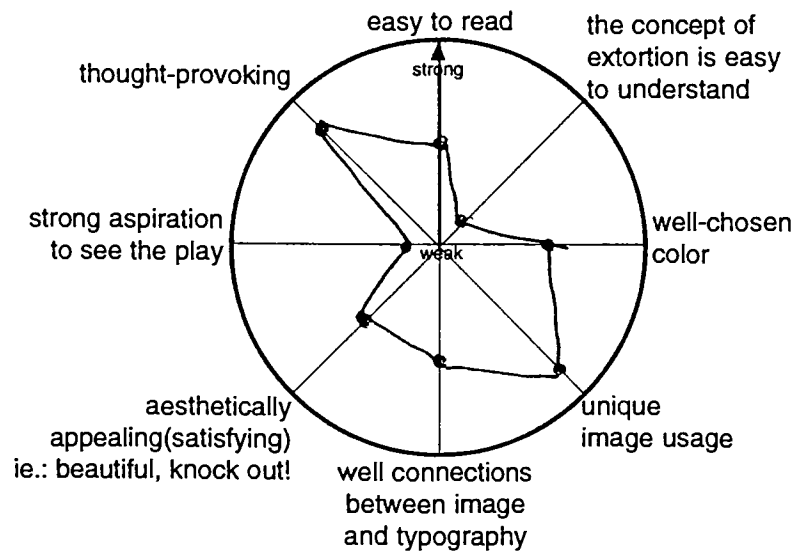
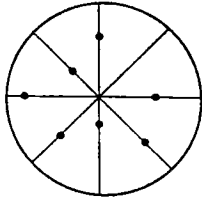
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☐ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

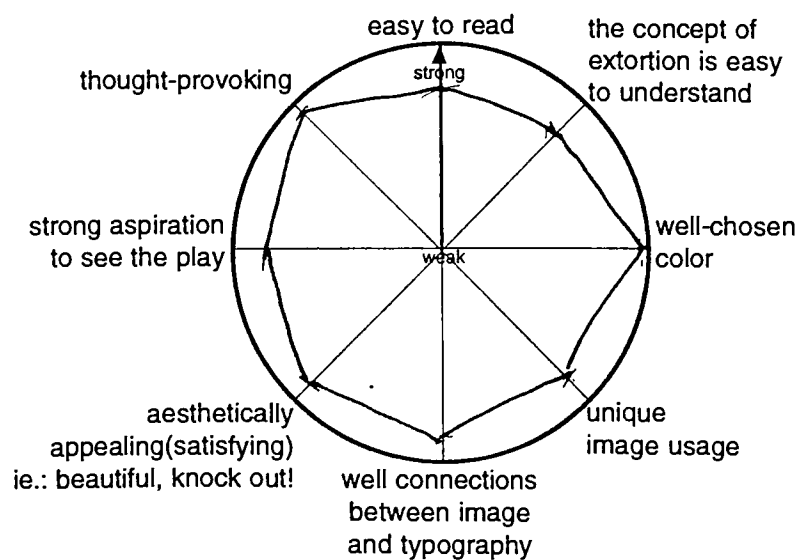
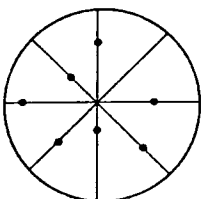
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☐ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



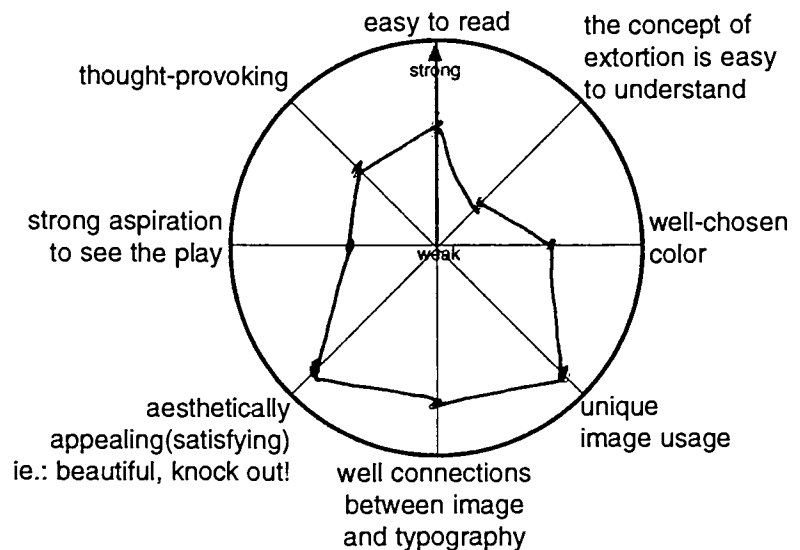
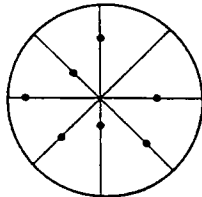
## Intermediate Evaluation

### POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

- ☐ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

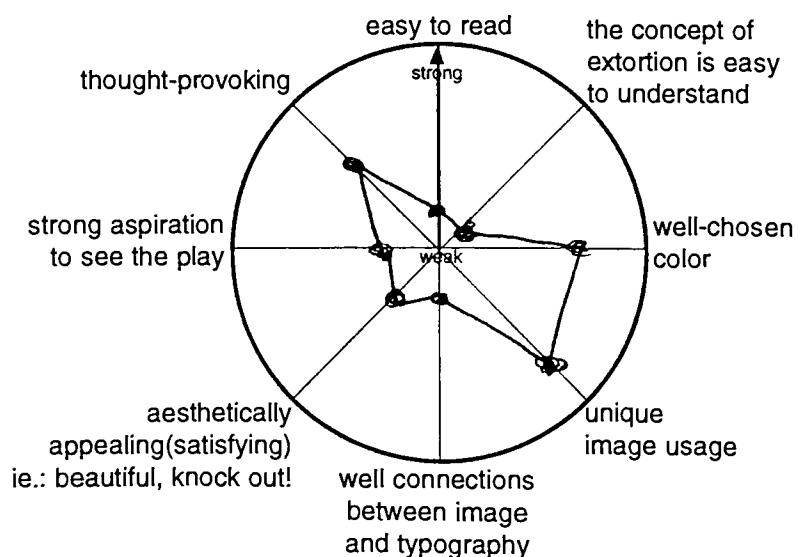
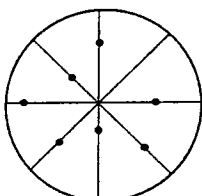
## Intermediate Evaluation

### POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

- ☐ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



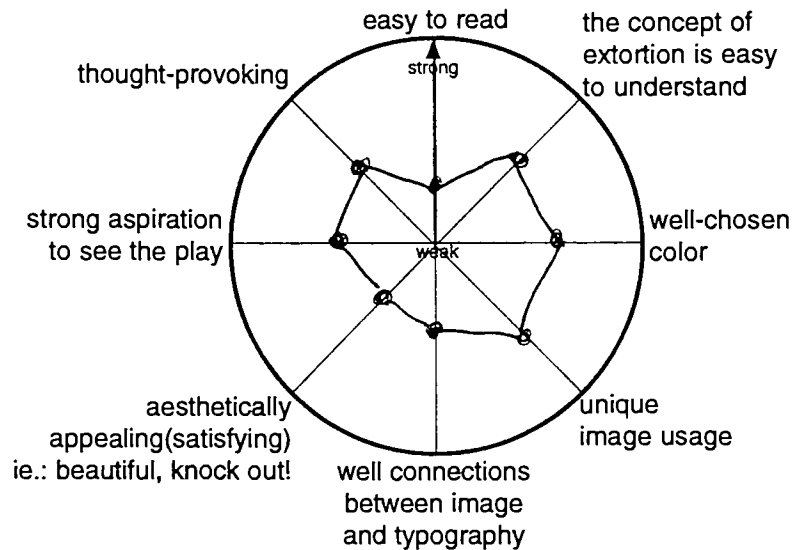
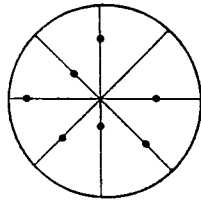
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

— I am familiar with this play  
 X I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



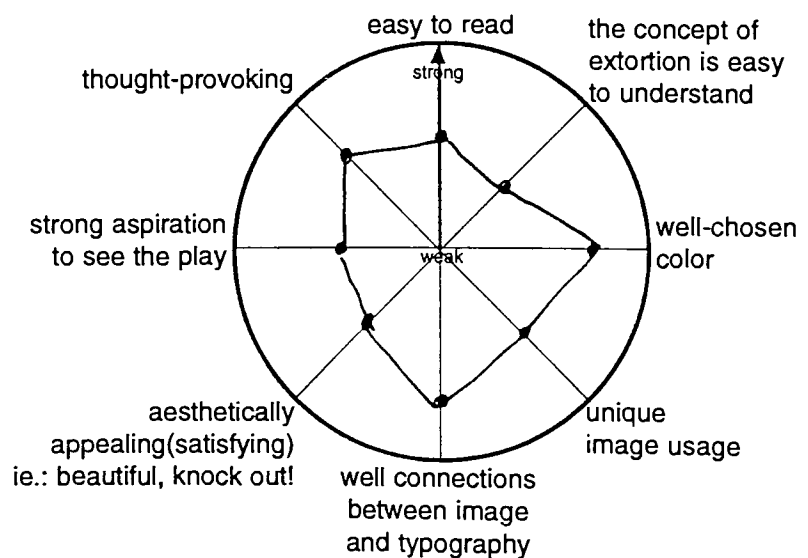
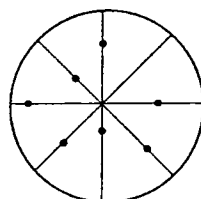
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

— I am familiar with this play  
 X I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



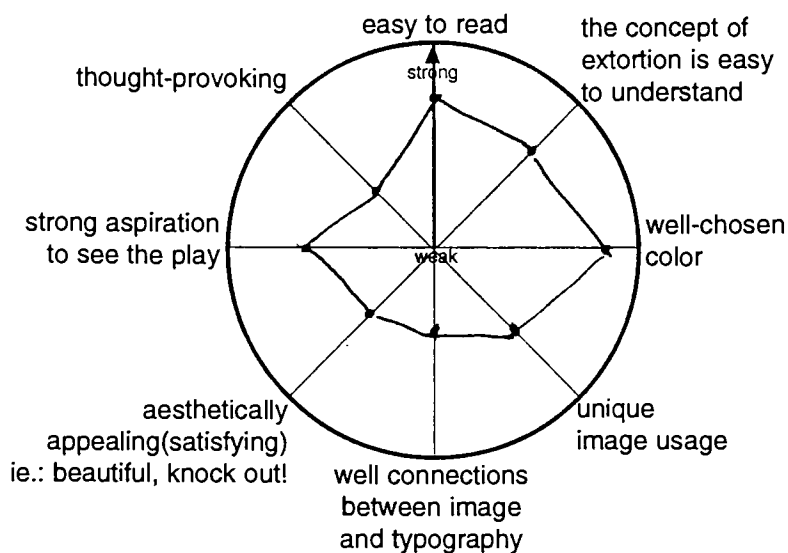
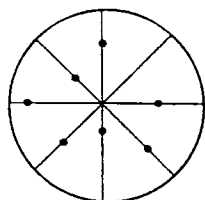
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

- ☐ I am familiar with this play.  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

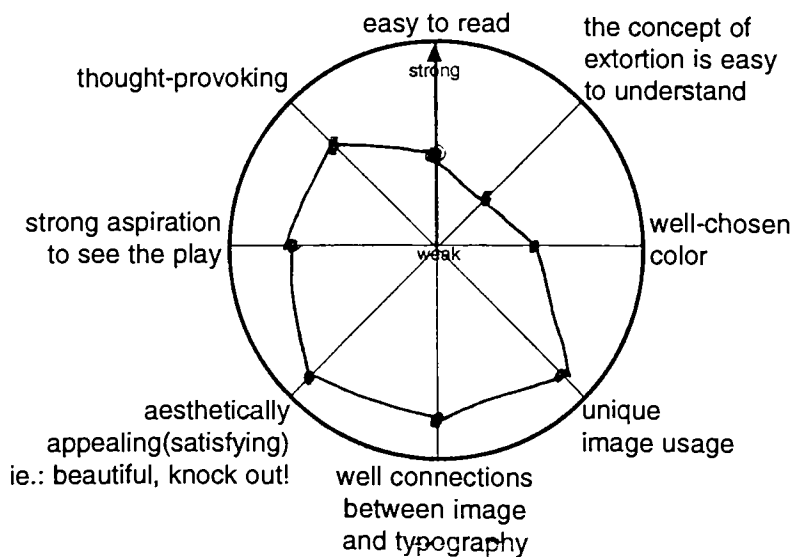
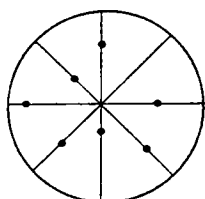
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

- ☐ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



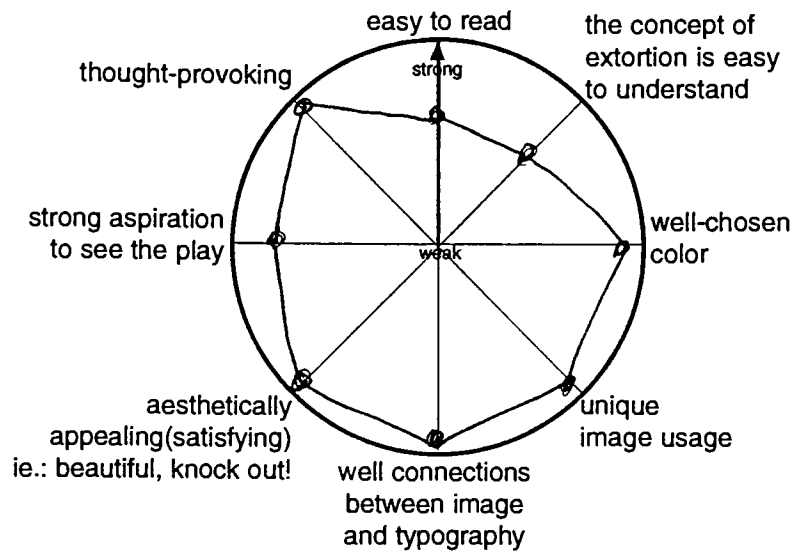
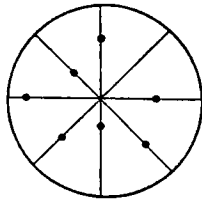
Intermediate Evaluation

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



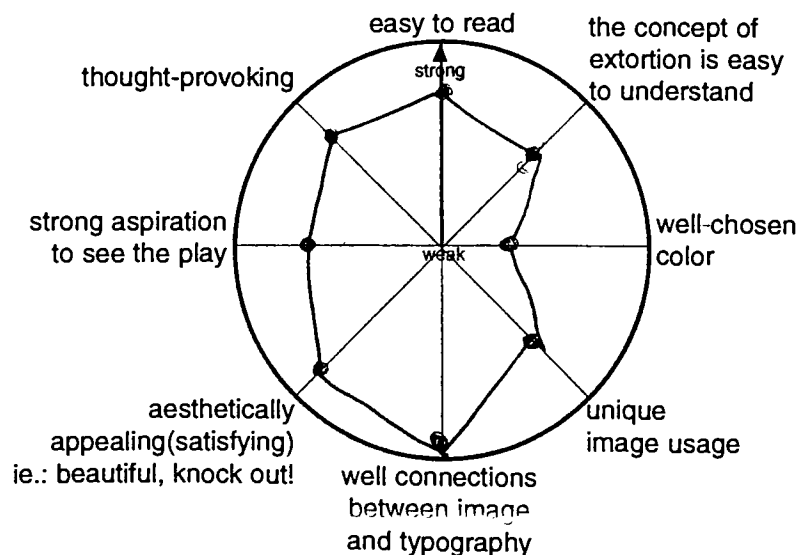
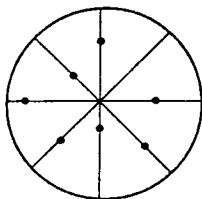
Intermediate Evaluation

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.



Example:



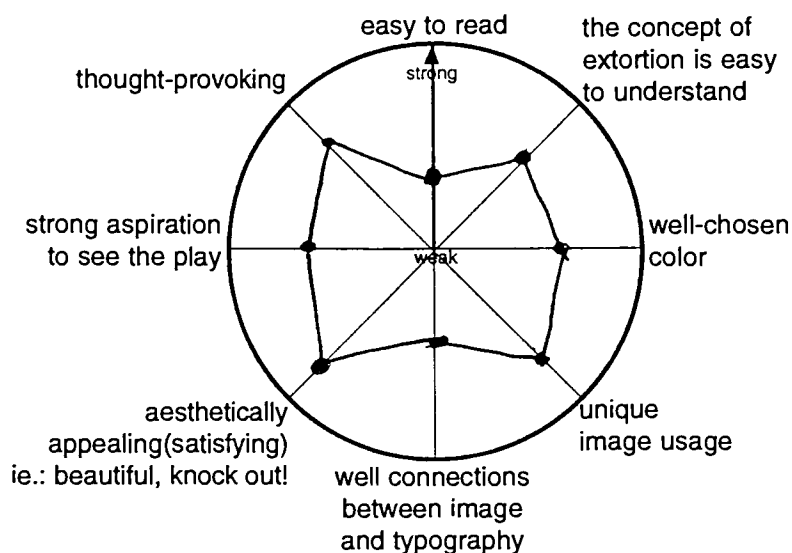
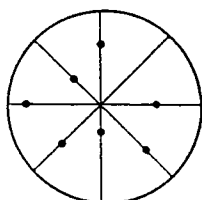
## Intermediate Evaluation

### POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

 I am familiar with this play  
 I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"



Example:



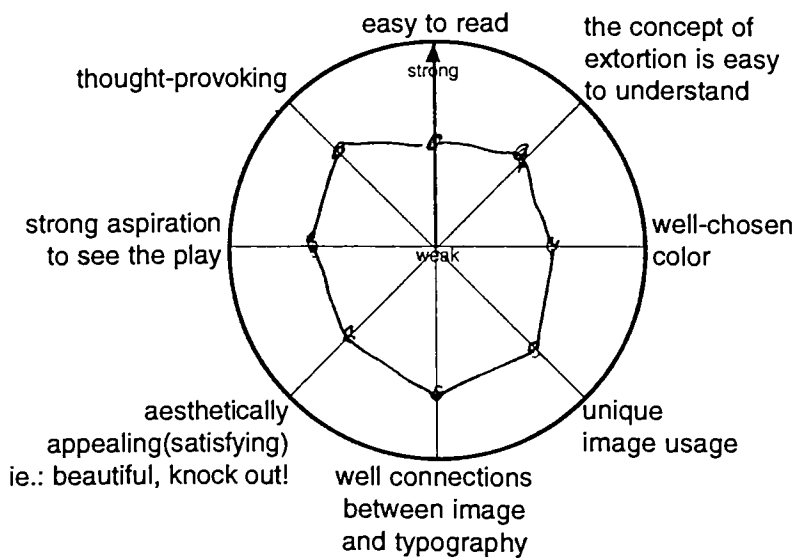
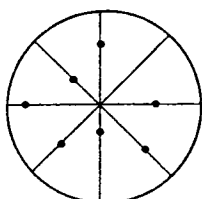
## Intermediate Evaluation

### POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

 I am familiar with this play  
 I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"



Example:



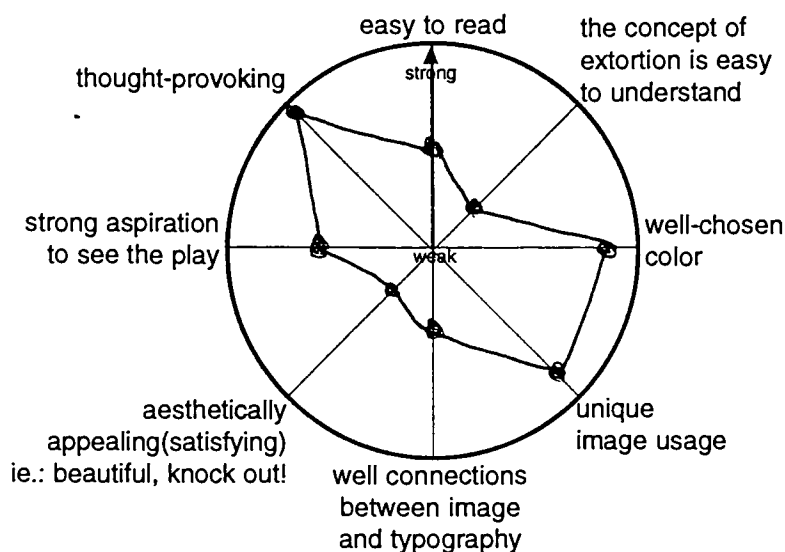
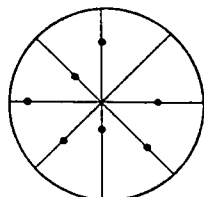
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

 I am familiar with this play  
 I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:





## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

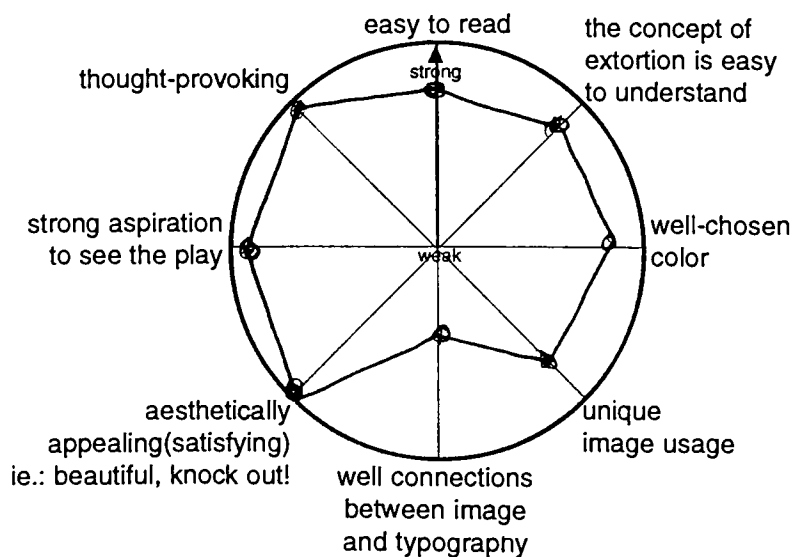
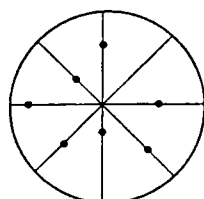
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER B

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

 I am familiar with this play  
 I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:





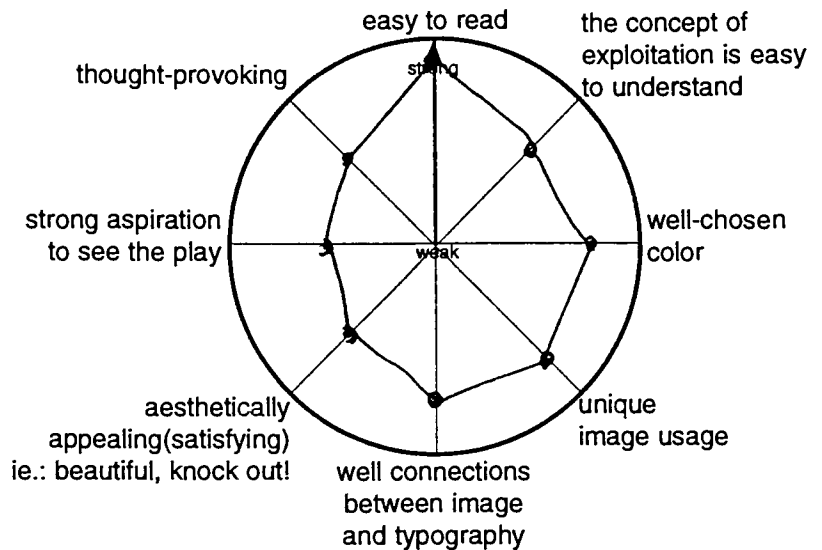
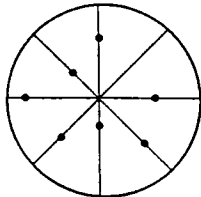
## Intermediate Evaluation

✓ I am familiar with this play  
 — I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

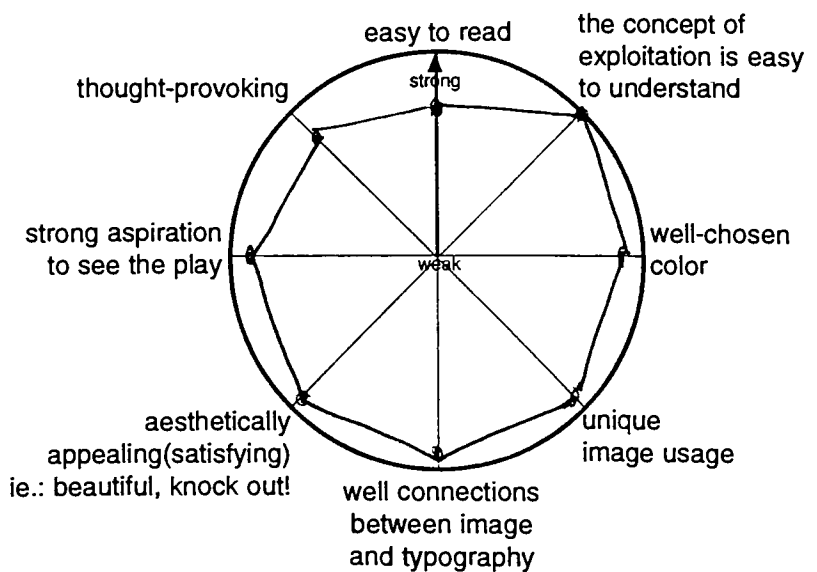
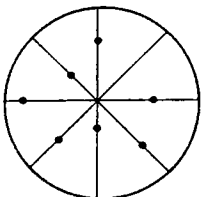
## Intermediate Evaluation

✓ I am familiar with this play  
 — I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



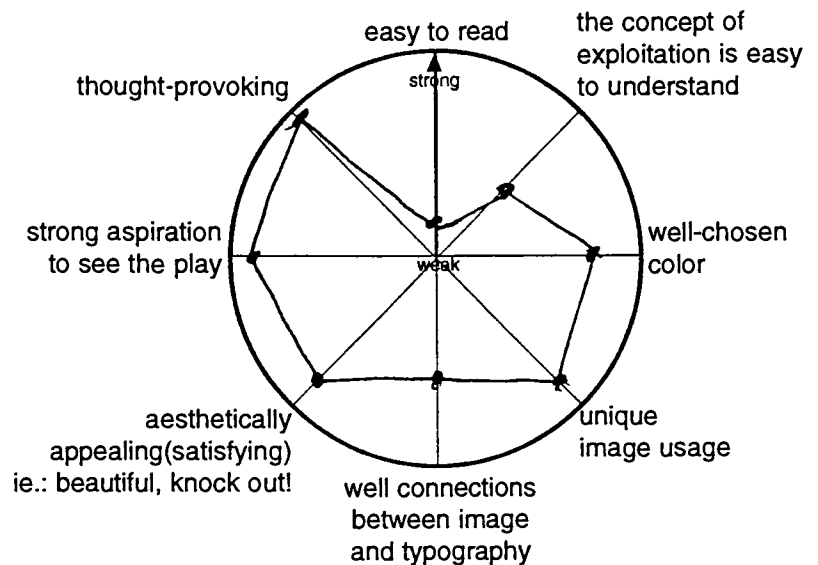
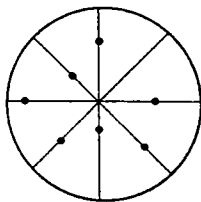
## Intermediate Evaluation

   I am familiar with this play  
   I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

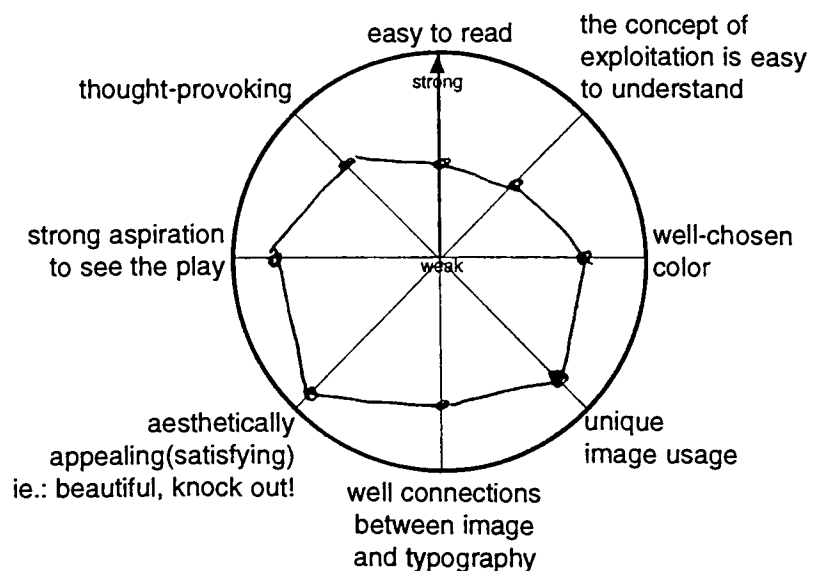
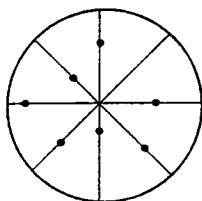
## Intermediate Evaluation

   I am familiar with this play  
   I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER C

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Example:



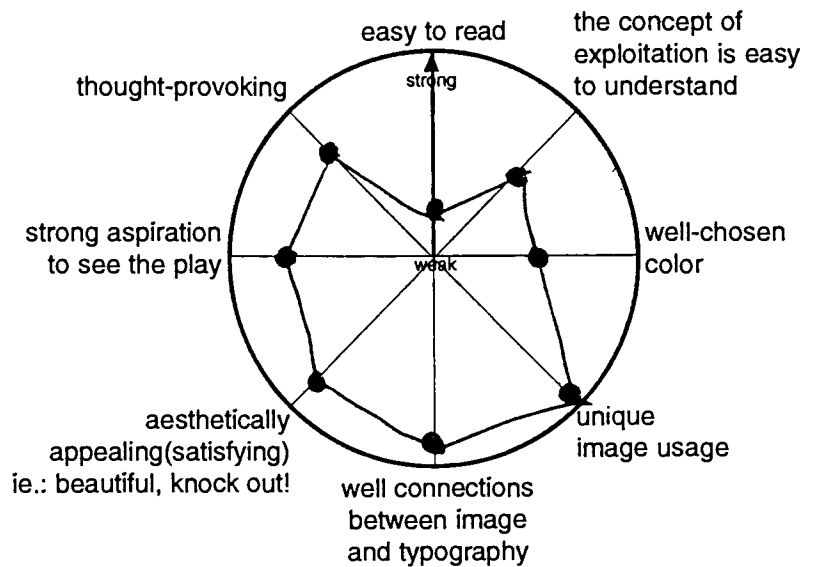
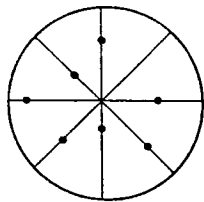
## Intermediate Evaluation

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 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

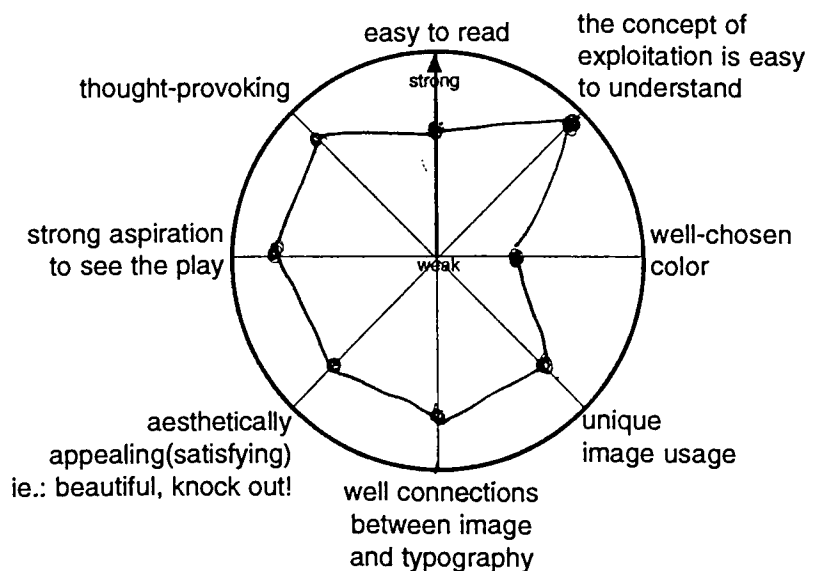
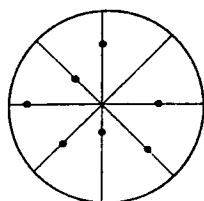
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

X I am familiar with this play  
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 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



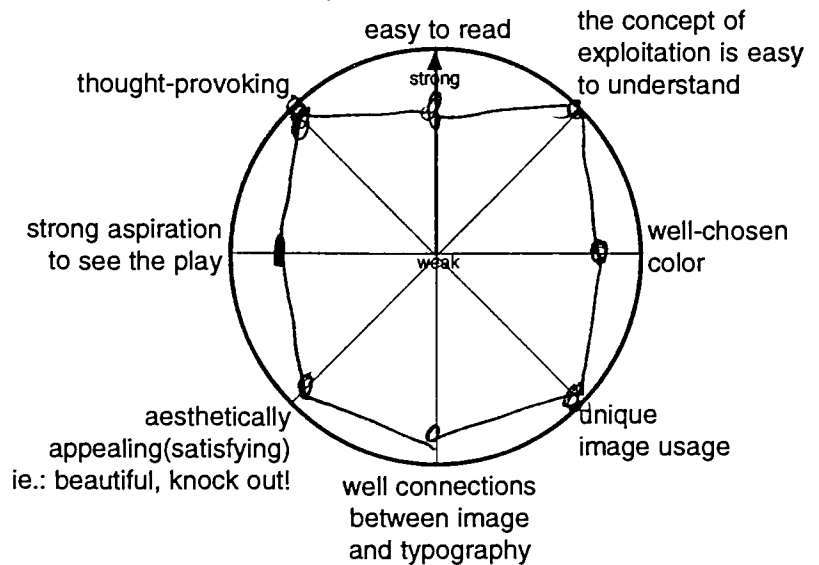
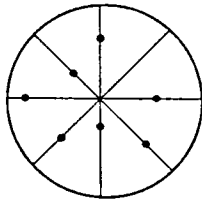
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☒ I am familiar with this play  
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 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



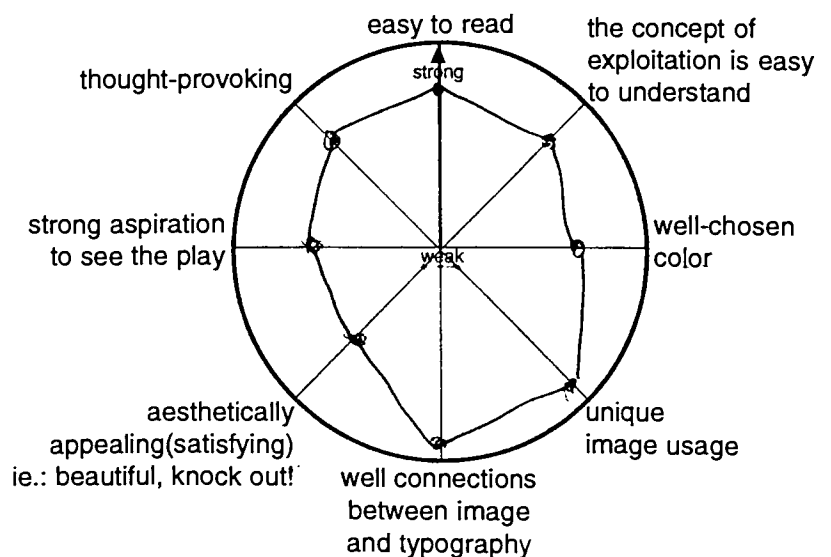
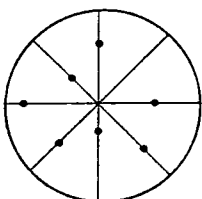
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 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



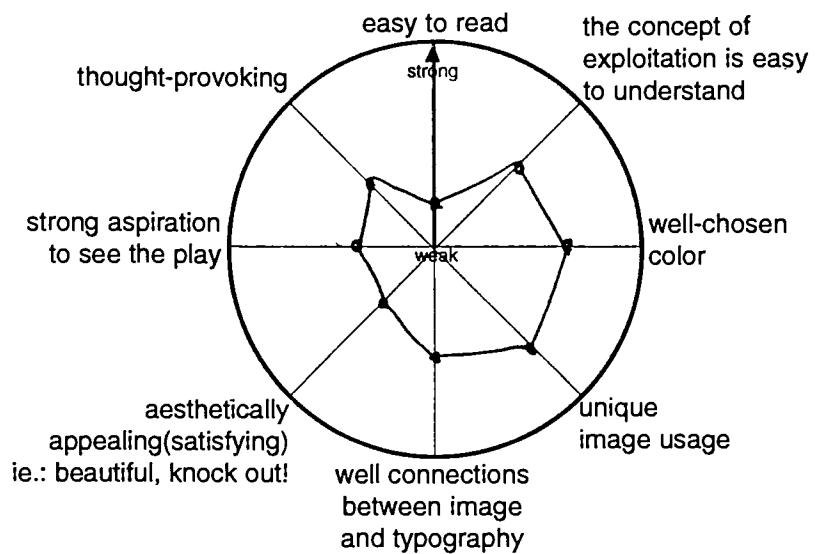
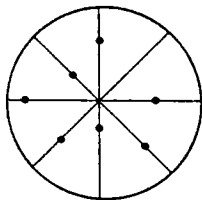
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 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



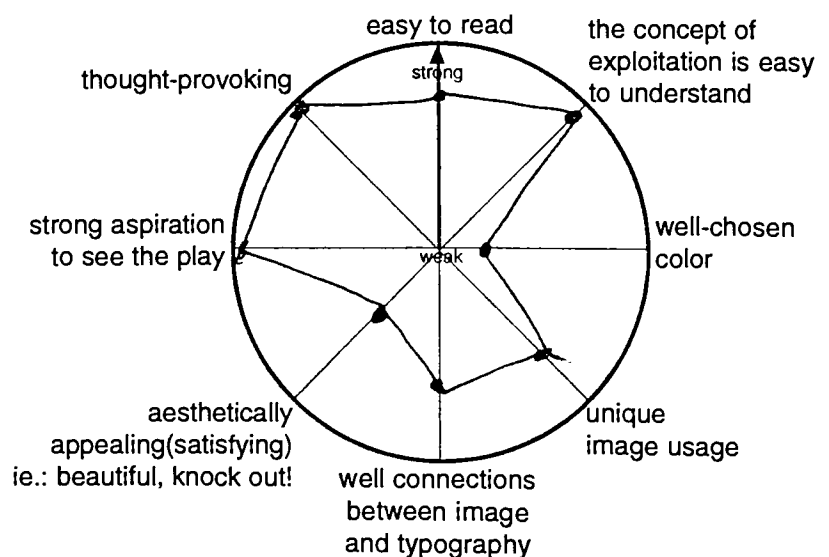
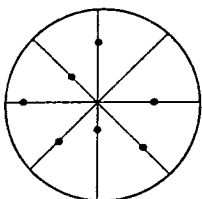
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

— I am familiar with this play  
 ✗ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



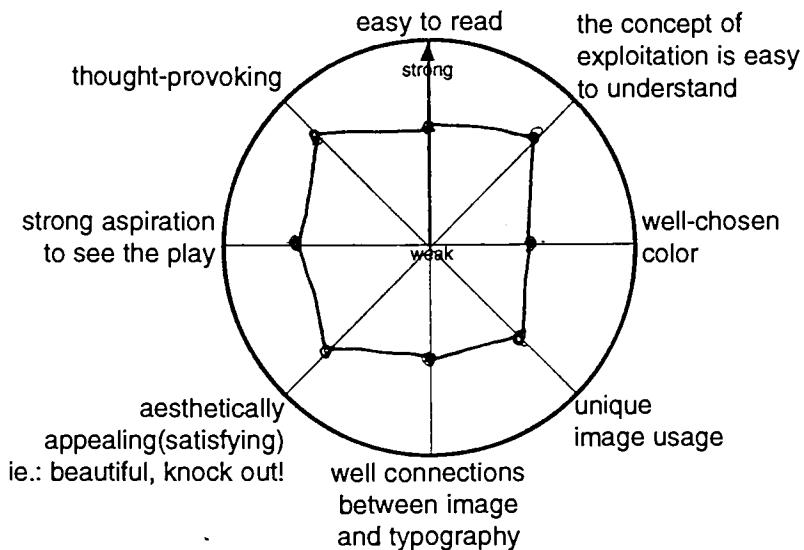
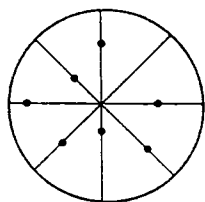
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 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

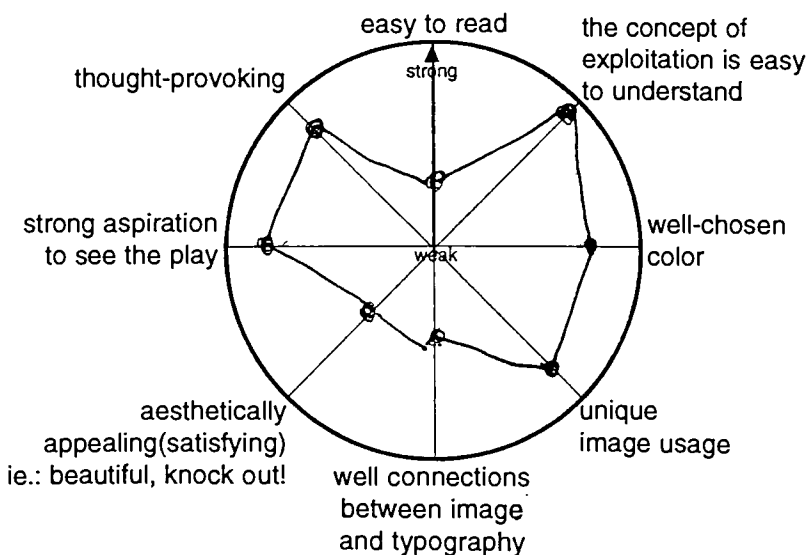
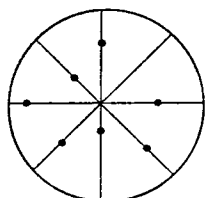
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER C

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 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



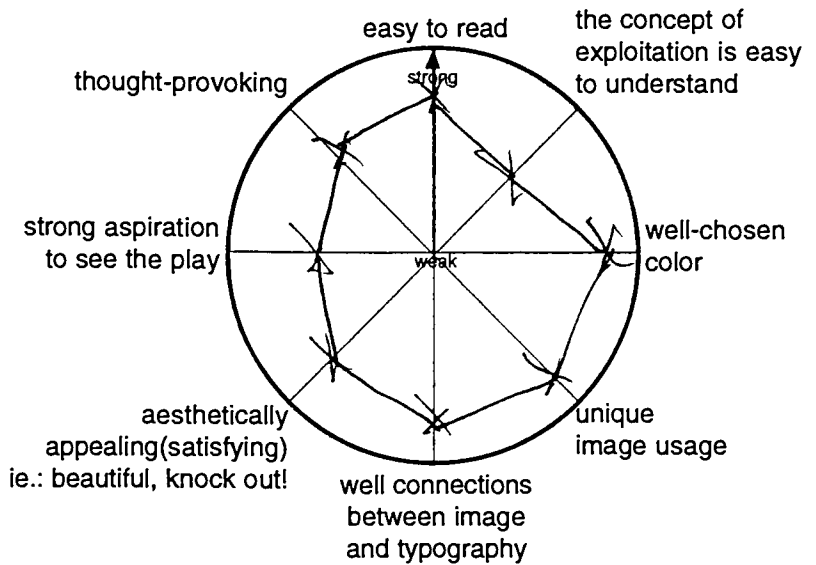
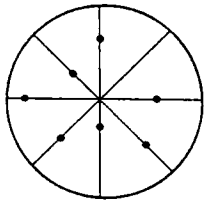
Intermediate Evaluation

POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

— I am familiar with this play  
 X I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



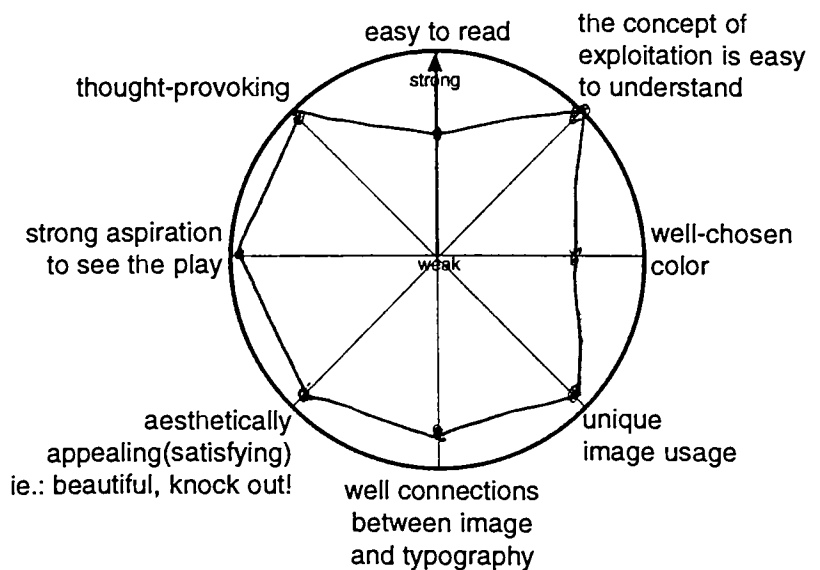
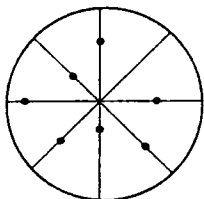
Intermediate Evaluation

POSTER C

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Example:



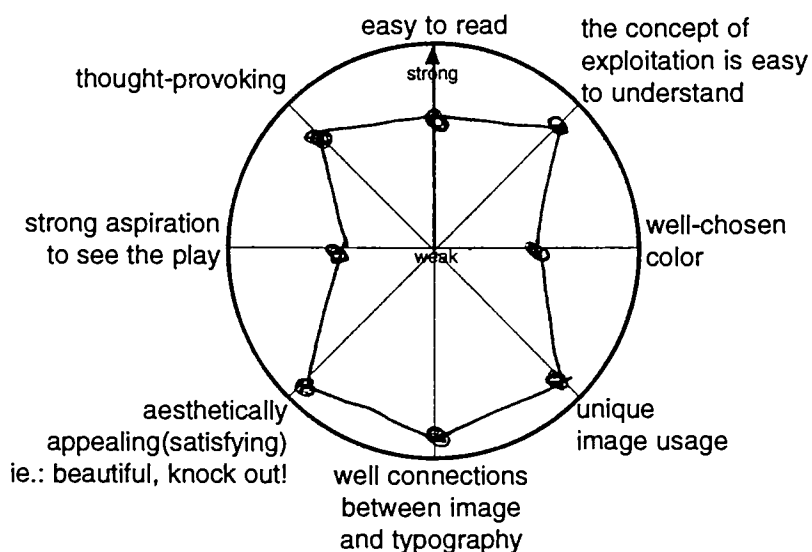
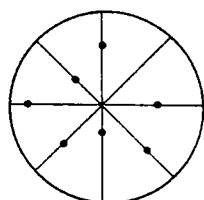
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Example:



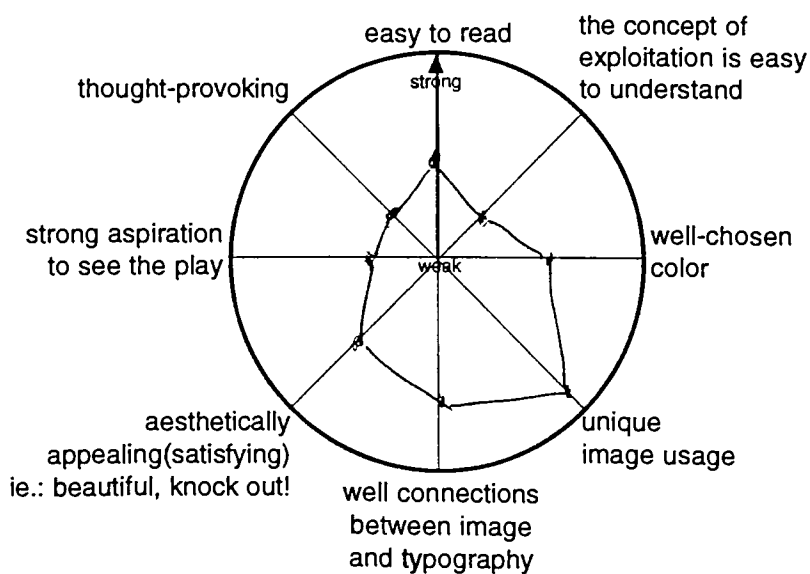
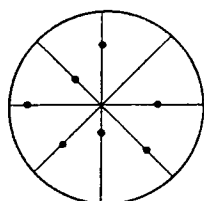
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Example:





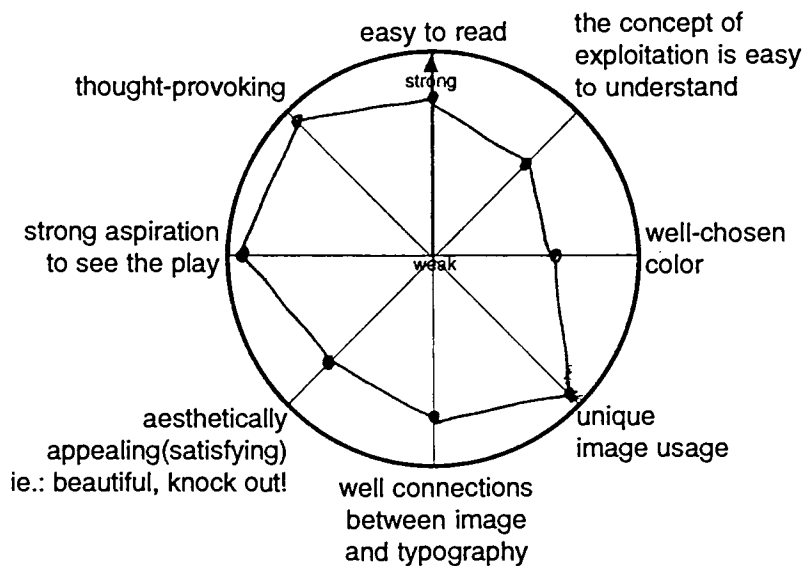
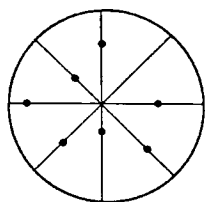
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 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

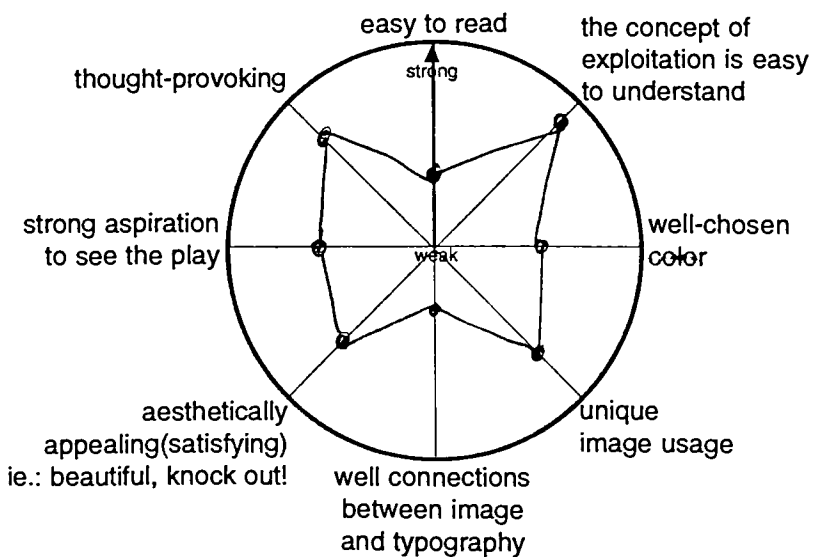
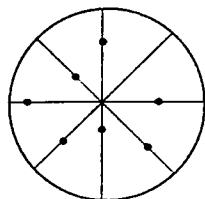
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

- I am familiar with this play  
 X I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



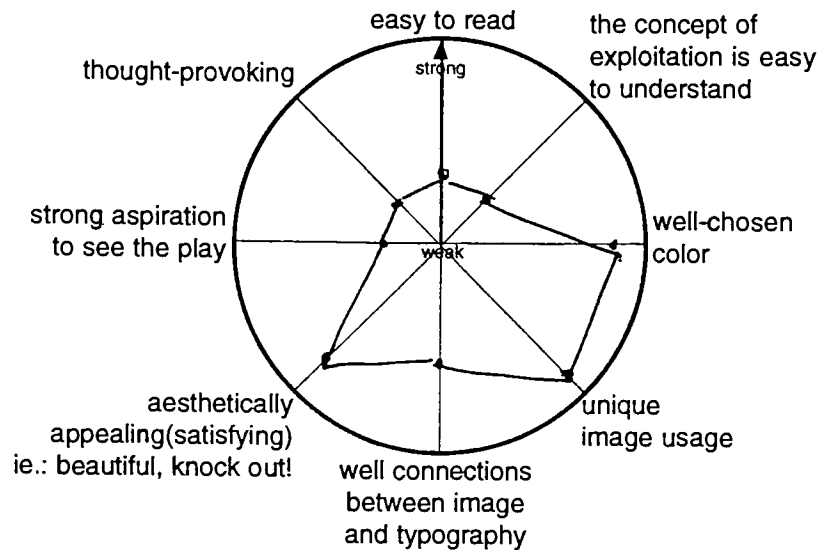
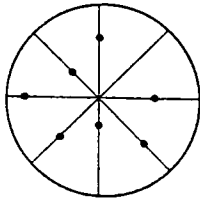
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

- ☒ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

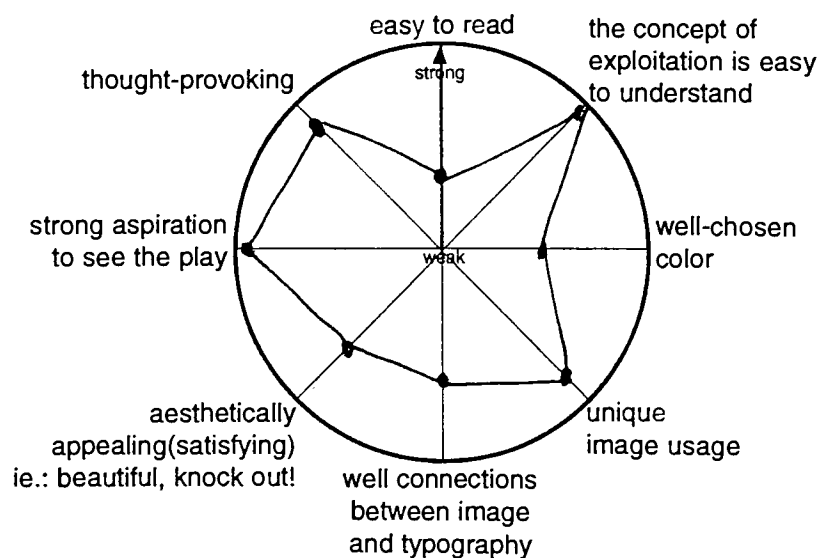
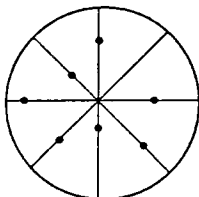
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

- ☒ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



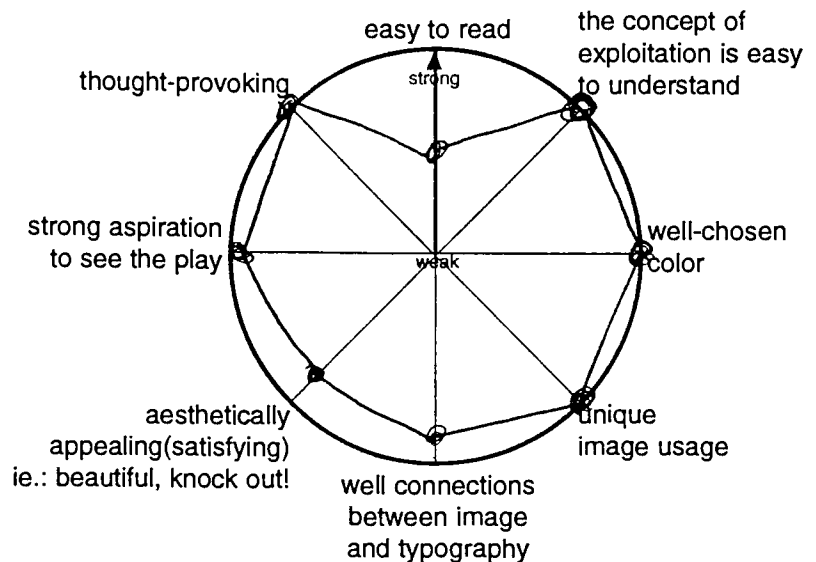
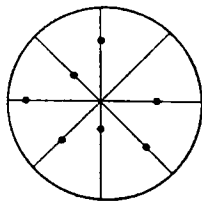
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

- ☐ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



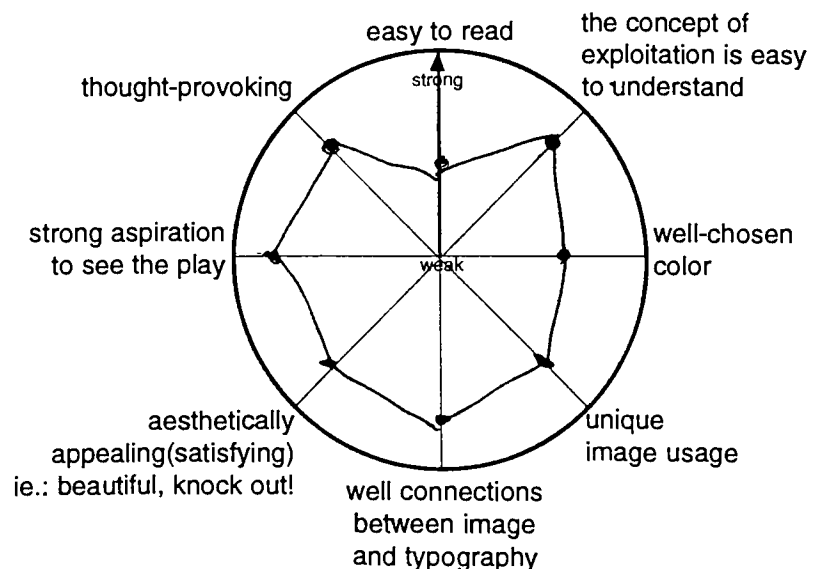
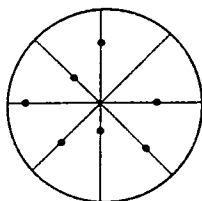
## Intermediate Evaluation

## POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

- ☐ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



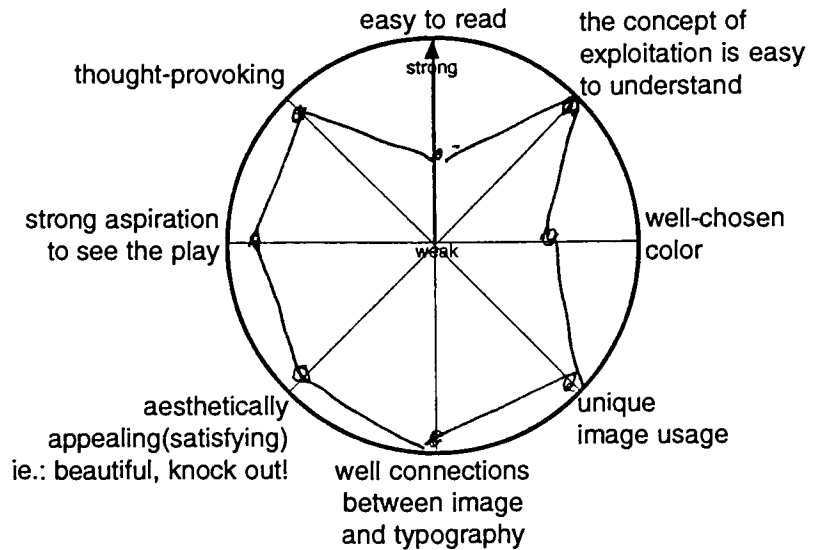
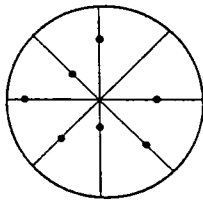
## Intermediate Evaluation

☐ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

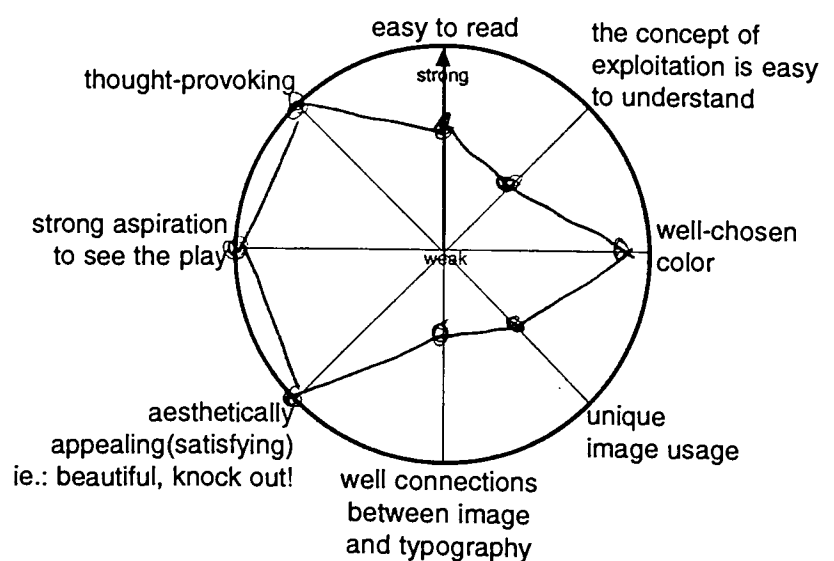
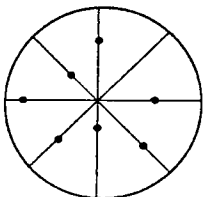
## Intermediate Evaluation

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

## POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

Example:



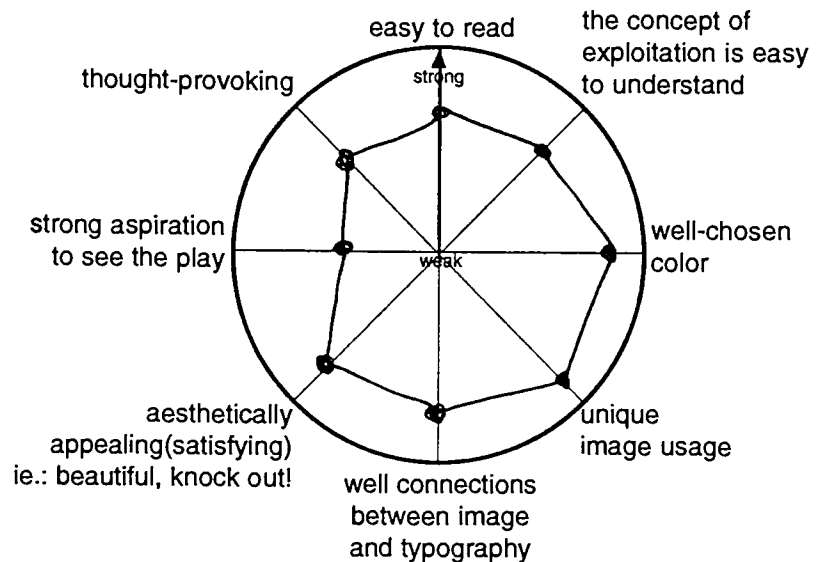
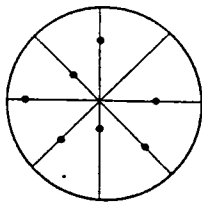
Intermediate Evaluation

POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☒ I am familiar with this play  
☐ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

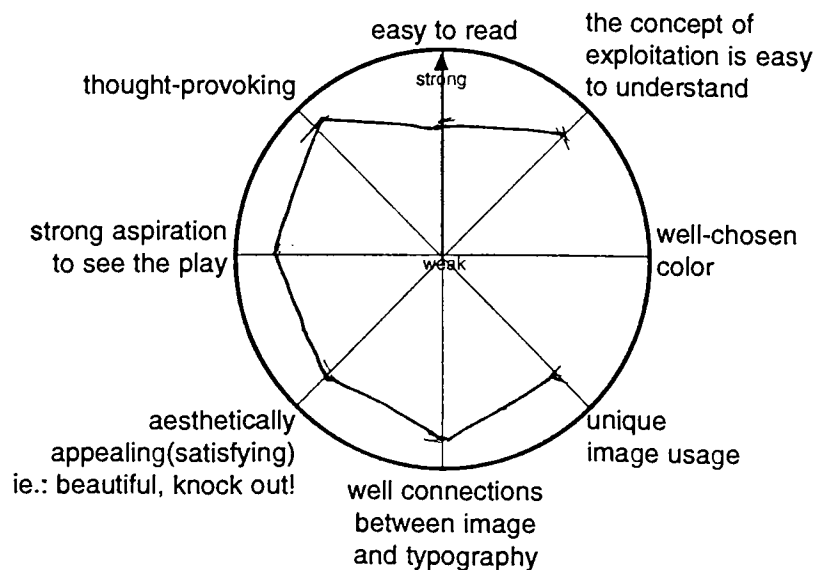
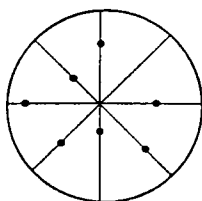
Intermediate Evaluation

POSTER C

After viewing this poster, please indicate your thoughts in the circle below.

☐ I am familiar with this play  
☒ I am not familiar with this play  
 "The good person of Szechwan"

Example:



## Intermediate Evaluation

## Please Answer the following questions:

1 Which sketches ~~make~~ you want to go to see the play ?  
Poster A Poster B Poster C

2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?

*It was aesthetically pleasing. Made me want to see the play.*

3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?

*Society*

4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?

*Thought provoking, dramatic*

5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?

*Seems to work fine*

## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

## Intermediate Evaluation

## Please Answer the following questions:

1 Which sketches ~~make~~ you want to go to see the play ?  
Poster A Poster B Poster C

2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?

*The bent figure - oppression? - "good person"*

3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?

*Someone who takes a burden upon himself - his life*

4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?

*martyrdom - stoic sadness*

*in -*

5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?

*fewer words*

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

- Which sketches make you want to go to see the play?  
Poster A Poster B Poster C  
*Stronger than the others, but not strong enough*
- Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you?  
*The messages were clearer, the type was easy to read, and it contained more graphical information*
- What do you think is the main concept of this play?  
*I'm not sure, not enough information was offered*
- Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play?  
*I have no idea*
- What are your suggestions for improvement?  
*Change typeface, try different symbols to convey information.*

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

- Which sketches make you want to go to see the play?  
Poster A Poster B Poster C  
*Caught my eye*
- Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you?  
*Struggle between good/bad*
- What do you think is the main concept of this play?  
*good/bad*
- Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play?  
*good/bad*
- What are your suggestions for improvement?  
*make the small text more readable*

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

- Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?  
Poster A Poster B Poster C
- Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?  
*Interesting image contrast*
- What do you think is the main concept of this play ?  
*duality*
- Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?  
*Confusion*
- What are your suggestions for improvement ?  
*More color variation*

## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

- Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?  
Poster A Poster B Poster C
- Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?  
*Images, they give alot of info in little space*
- What do you think is the main concept of this play ?  
*Duality, oppression, overwork*
- Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?  
*Success, Hard ship, struggle*
- What are your suggestions for improvement ?  
*look. Good*



## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

- 1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?

Poster A    Poster B    Poster C

- 2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?

Poster C was the only one that made any sense at all to me.

- 3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?

Something about a person who revolutionizes factory work...?

- 4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?

Serious and Misfortunate

- 5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?

Make the illustrations less far-fetched from actual scenes in the play.

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

- 1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?

Poster A    Poster B    Poster C

- 2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?

The business of the poster involves thought

- 3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?

Good Topic

- 4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?

Confusion    Fear  
Sadness

- 5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?

More distinct Type

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

- 1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?  
Poster A    Poster B    Poster C
- 2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?  
Variety, complexity, unity
- 3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?  
Torture, oppression
- 4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?  
Struggle, depression
- 5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?  
Get rid of the smoke

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

- 1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?  
Poster A    Poster B    Poster C
- 2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?  
More images ~~are~~ demanding more thought
- 3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?  
Repression of people
- 4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?  
Sadness, worthlessness
- 5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?  
Large ~~B~~ PRINT, rel/H the man/women

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play?

Poster A   Poster B   Poster C

2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you?

*BECAUSE the people look beaten down*

3 What do you think is the main concept of this play?

*People get beaten down, oppression*

4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play?

*Oppression, sex*

5 What are your suggestions for improvement?

*Bigger Font.  
A one liner.*

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play?

Poster A   Poster B   Poster C

2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you?

*more there more interesting*

3 What do you think is the main concept of this play?

*Men & woman*

4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play?

*Good and bad*

5 What are your suggestions for improvement?

**Intermediate Evaluation**

**Please Answer the following questions:**

1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?

Poster A    Poster B    Poster C

2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?

More elaborate, gives clues to content

3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?

Reality

4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?

?

5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?

✓

**Intermediate Evaluation**

**Please Answer the following questions:**

1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?

Poster A    Poster B    Poster C

2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?

Like the multi images.

3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?

4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?

5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?

Bigger print.

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

- 1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?

Poster A    Poster B    Poster C

- 2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?

People on bottom thought protesting

- 3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?

exploitation of man by industry

- 4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?

Oppression

- 5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?

Bigger text

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

- 1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?

Poster A    Poster B    Poster C

- 2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?

This poster carries the theme of the play, the exploited people. It is fairly easy to understand.

- 3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?

I think the main concept is the abuse that workers ~~live~~ live in a factory or capitalistic society.

- 4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?

I think the emotions are sadness, frustration

- 5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?

My suggestion would be to maybe have a different color combination. I don't like the pink. Try a more vibrant color

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

- Which sketches make you want to go to see the play?  
Poster A   Poster B   Poster C
- Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you?  
Poster C interests me because it is dynamic; it shows the effect the story has on the characters — i.e., exploitation.
- What do you think is the main concept of this play?  
Exploitation
- Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play?  
Gloom and doom; mostly dark emotions, with a few glimmers of hope and light
- What are your suggestions for improvement?  
Make the poster easier to read. Work on the Face/Chest/belly outline — it doesn't immediately make sense to the eye.

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

- Which sketches make you want to go to see the play?  
Poster A   Poster B   Poster C
- Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you?  
I think the factory image portrays the play well!
- What do you think is the main concept of this play?  
two persons in one body  
hard workers
- Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play?  
depression
- What are your suggestions for improvement?  
change colors, (more cool colors)  
(instead of warm)  
make words larger

**Intermediate Evaluation****Please Answer the following questions:**

- 1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?  
Poster A   Poster B   Poster C
  - 2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?  
More info about the play
  - 3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?  
exploitation
  - 4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?  
Sorrow
  - 5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?  
different colors
- 

**Intermediate Evaluation****Please Answer the following questions:**

- 1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?  
Poster A   Poster B   Poster C
- 2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?  
It has images that are pretty easy to understand
- 3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?  
exploitation in a factory
- 4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?  
Sad, nervous, work too hard
- 5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?  
Don't make them so abstract. They are harder to understand when you have to stare at the picture

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play?

Poster A Poster B Poster C

2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you?

① Due to the imagery, it was thought provoking, eye catching

3 What do you think is the main concept of this play?

That goodness does not always pay off, you have to be  
disobedient to get what  
you want

4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play?

Sadness, frustration, helplessness

5 What are your suggestions for improvement?

The color, you should change it

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play?

Poster A Poster B Poster C

2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you?

More to look at, I'd be more  
likely to pick it out of many posters to read

3 What do you think is the main concept of this play?

exploitation

4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play?

confusion

5 What are your suggestions for improvement?

Bigger type with most of  
poster C



## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

- 1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?  
Poster A    Poster B    Poster C
- 2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?  
*Shows two face & like image of Jarmoil*
- 3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?  
*two faced hurt & exploitation*
- 4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?  
*exploitation, day-to-day toil*
- 5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?  
*I love poster C, but make "little people" bigger*

## A Critical Analysis of Theatre Posters

Pei-ying Wu

## Intermediate Evaluation

Please Answer the following questions:

- 1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?  
Poster A    Poster B    Poster C
- 2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?  
*Shows more of the Theme of the Play*
- 3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?  
*exploitation and hardship*
- 4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?  
*Pain, Struggle*
- 5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?  
*Larger print*

**Intermediate Evaluation**

**Please Answer the following questions:**

- 1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?  
Poster A    Poster B    Poster C
  - 2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?
  - 3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ? *Exploitation of people*
  - 4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ? *Repression*
  - 5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?
- 

**Intermediate Evaluation**

**Please Answer the following questions:**

- 1 Which sketches make you want to go to see the play ?  
Poster A    Poster B    Poster C
- 2 Based on your answer to question 1, why these posters inspire you ?  
*It's the most clear to me.*
- 3 What do you think is the main concept of this play ?  
*Struggle of tobacco workers*
- 4 Based on the poster layouts, what do you think are the main emotions in the play ?  
*Happiness, hurt, betrayal.*
- 5 What are your suggestions for improvement ?

**Appendix VI**  
**Exhibition Explanation Panels**

# Theatre Poster Design

## A Creative-Critical Analysis

**Introduction:**

Theatre posters have a long,richly aesthetic history, with many famous artists working in the medium. The essential purpose of theatre poster design is to graphically express the play's significance while appealing aesthetically to the potential audience.

As an experienced theatre practitioner and a student of graphic design, I am interested in the interpretive nature of theatre poster design. Therefore, my M.F.A. thesis project focuses critically on this question:

**How does the graphic design of a theatre poster visually communicate the significance of the performed play?**

**Choose the Play:**

***The Good Person of Szechwan***

For my creative-critical study, I chose the play *The Good Person of Szechwan* by the German author Bertolt Brecht. Written in the late 1930s, the play portrays, in parable form, the struggle to survive in a world of economically defined social difficulties. This play is scheduled to be performed next year in the Panara Theatre. My posters will be used to promote this RIT Players production at that time.

**The story of *The Good Person of Szechwan*:**

The main character in the play, Shen Teh, has a dual role. She is an honest person who makes a living as a prostitute. She is very generous with the money she earns, especially with the poor. Soon they begin to exploit her generosity, leaving her with nothing to live on. To lessen her burden, she takes on the persona of Shui Ta, a hard-nosed businessman. In this way, Shen Teh hopes also to balance romantic and generous personality. But she falls.

**Analyze the Play:**

**Identify the themes of the play**  
My approach was to first identify the main thematic thrusts of the play and then to explore elements that could signify these themes. Good and evil, innocence and exploitation, and female / male duality define my posters' main purposes.

**Create Posters:**

**Use Generative Matrix**  
I used a Generative Matrix to decide on what iconic, indexic and symbolic elements could most strongly represent the play's themes.

Generative Matrix:











	Poster 1 Dual Personality	Poster 2 Burden	Poster 3 Exploitation
Iconic (looks like)	Profile of female-good Profile of male-evil	Person struggling to survive  Pregnant woman	Healthy people enter factory and exit as burdened souls  Smokestacks spew out expressive smoke
Indexic (points to)	Breast points to title "good person"	Man's nose points to struggling person	Duality of smokestacks suggest factories both are good and exploitive
Symbolic (convention)	Pink-female Blue-male  Light-good Dark-evil	Shape of woman's belly  Pink-female Blue-male	Most of the poster is dark, suggesting evil  Left side of the poster is pink, feminine suggesting good and nurturing

# Visual Rhetoric:

As part of my thesis research and interest in theatre posters, I selected a number of posters and analyzed them in terms of rhetorical codes.

A Visual Rhetoric Matrix was used to organize these examples. In designing theatre posters, visual elements that are **similar, different or ambiguous** can be **added, suppressed, substituted or exchanged** to create a range of different meanings.

## Visual Rhetoric Matrix:

	Addition	Suppression	Substitution	Exchange
<b>Similarity</b> elements look the same or similar	 repetition	 ellipsis	 allusion	 inversion
<b>Difference</b> elements are visually different	 accumulation	 suspension	 metonymy	<div>no examples found</div> asyndeton
<b>Ambiguity</b> elements can introduce confusion, uncertainty and multiple meaning	 paradox	 tautology	 pun	<div>no examples found</div> double meaning